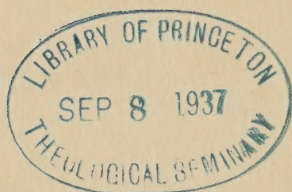


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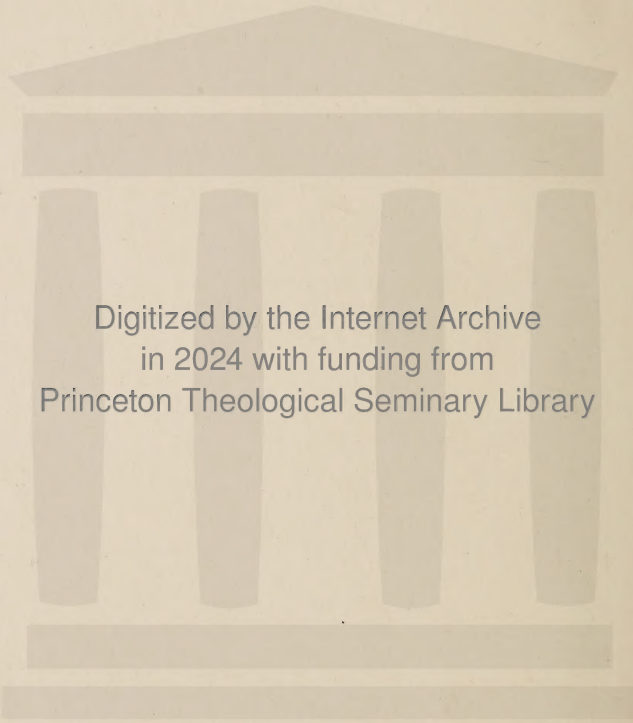
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Williams, Edward Irwin  
Franklin, 1886-  
Horace Mann, educational  
statesman



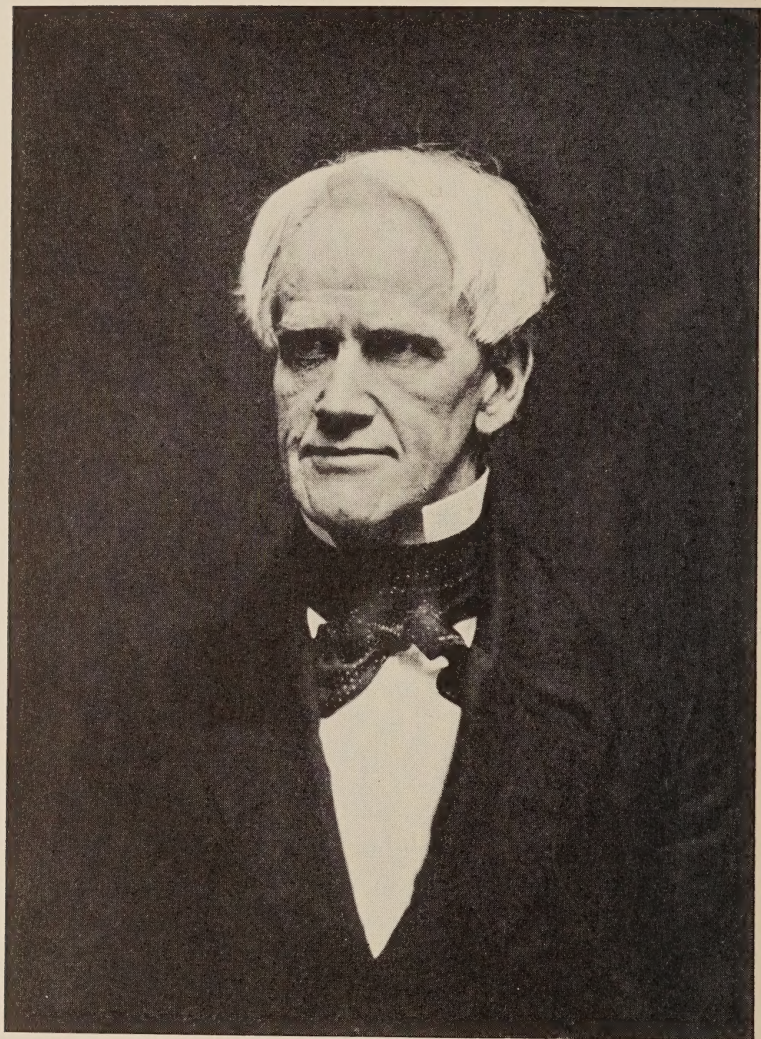




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HORACE MANN



*From an Original Daguerreotype Owned by the Author*

HORACE MANN

**HORACE MANN**  
**EDUCATIONAL STATESMAN**

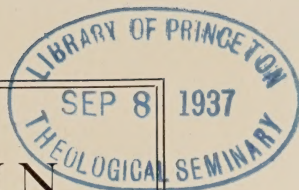
**E. I. F. WILLIAMS**

PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION  
HEIDELBERG COLLEGE, TIFFIN, OHIO

**THE MACMILLAN COMPANY**

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**1937**





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*To*  
*MY PARENTS*  
*My First Teachers*





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## PREFACE

It is now a century since Horace Mann began his work as secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education. The period during which the centennial occurs marks an interesting epoch in education. Now, as then, social reform is in the air and rival social doctrines are struggling for supremacy; now, as then, a severe financial depression has tempered the minds of the people; now, as then, education commands the attention of the general public who see the compelling importance of schools for the universal diffusion of knowledge and the creation of constructive attitudes and ideals.

Any great man is both the producer and the product of his own age and time. To make a life understandable, therefore, it is necessary to show how it relates to the pattern of events and the movements of the day. A considerable amount of material has, therefore, been included in this biography to place Mr. Mann's work in the social, religious, political, and educational framework of a century ago. From early manhood he was a sympathetic participant in reform movements, later becoming a leader in the one reform which seemed to him the most important of all—that of education. It does not in the least detract from his own outstanding contribution to recognize that he was merely the prophet of a great advance movement in which scores and hundreds of others were engaged.

The author's motive in writing the biography is to do honor to one who, more than any other, was responsible



for the common-school revival of a hundred years ago. Our nation has traditionally rendered acclaim to great statesmen, warriors, and public servants by enshrining their names and forms in enduring marble and bronze. Because their work is less spectacular, the achievements of the educators, who are the real builders of the nation, have to a large degree remained unknown. It is the author's hope that this volume may serve to call some degree of public attention to one, both statesman and educator, who deserves to be ranked with Washington and Lincoln in his influence upon the development of a democratic America and whose influence still persists.

The material has been assembled during several years of research in leading libraries and historical societies of America. To procure the illustrations, the author personally visited the scenes of Mann's life and work. Many of the illustrations were secured by him even before the present biography was contemplated. Others were found in old books and in original documents. Many have not been printed elsewhere previously.

In writing of Mr. Mann, one is embarrassed by the wealth of source matter available. To keep the book within proper limits, it was necessary to omit much that was pertinent and valuable. Oliver Wendell Holmes once wrote: "The life of an individual is in many respects like a child's dissected map. If I could live a hundred years, keeping my intelligence to the last, I feel as if I could put the pieces together until they made a perfectly connected whole. . . . If I could look back on the whole, as we look at the child's map when it is put together, I feel that I should have my whole life intelligently laid out before me." If it is difficult for an individual to reconstruct his own life in retrospect, how much more arduous it is to weave the strands of life of

another, gathered here and there, into a unified pattern. But this is a task which the biographer must assume.

There are many to whom the author owes much for encouragement and assistance. In particular, his thanks are due to the directors and personnel of the following institutions: The New York State Library, Albany, New York; The Congressional Library, Washington, D. C.; The Harvard University Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts; The Teachers College Library, Columbia University, New York City; The New York City Public Library; The Boston Public Library; The Brown University Library, Providence, R. I.; The Antioch College Library, Yellow Springs, Ohio; The Cincinnati Public Library; the library of the Athenaeum, Boston, Massachusetts; the Franklin Public Library, Franklin, Massachusetts; and the Massachusetts State Library, Boston, Massachusetts.

For valuable suggestions and encouragement he is indebted to the following: Payson Smith, for seventeen years Commissioner of Education in Massachusetts; Joy Morgan, editor of *The Journal of the National Education Association*; William C. Bagley and I. L. Kandel, of Teachers College, Columbia University; Alfred L. Hall-Quest, of New York City; M. J. Van Leeuwen, of Franklin, Massachusetts; and the many who have listened patiently to an illustrated lecture on the life of Mr. Mann which the author has given at educational gatherings, colleges, and universities.

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written by his wife, Mary Mann, have furnished an almost inexhaustible supply of rich detail for the biographer.

Finally, the author feels a deep debt of gratitude to President Charles E. Miller, of Heidelberg College, for his generous encouragement in this as in other educational projects over a period of years.

The book is addressed to teachers, administrators, parents, and the general public, all of whom owe a debt greater than is often realized to the "Father of the Common Schools," who hastened the time when universal, free, non-sectarian public education became a reality.

E. I. F. WILLIAMS

March 22, 1937



HORACE MANN



## CHAPTER I

### A RIGOROUS BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

**H**ORACE MANN, "Father of the Common Schools," was born in Franklin, a small old New England town in southeastern Massachusetts, May 4, 1796.

Franklin was organized as a town in 1778 when the Revolutionary War was in full swing. It was a typical rural community dominated by a small village at the center, both together having a population of about eleven hundred at the close of the eighteenth century. Although predominantly rural, it was also the seat of a small but rising industry, the manufacture of hats.

The Manns were an early family of the commonwealth. The Franklin branch was descended from William Mann, of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Horace Mann was sixth in descent from William Mann, who was born in England. A graduate of Harvard College, and an early teacher and minister in Wrentham and Franklin, William's son, Samuel, was "a very good, a very great and learned man." The descendants were common folk, never wealthy or prominent, but substantial, honorable citizens.

Horace's great grandfather cut down the trees and built a modest house on the farm which for more than a century was to be in the family name. Thomas Mann, father of Horace, owned and cultivated this small farm situated in the part of the town then called "Mann Plains." In common with other farmers in New England at that date, he was compelled to enlist his children to assist in the precarious

and rigorous struggle of making a living, particularly because he was in poor health. Toil was deemed honorable, even though it was excessive. The family worked together for their common support. The father died of tuberculosis when Horace was but thirteen years of age. Though untutored and with little schooling, he left an impression of unusual intellectual strength and rugged morality as a rich heritage to his family.

Horace's mother, with whom he lived until he was twenty years of age, was typical of the conscientious, sensible, religious, energetic, untutored women of rural communities of the time. Though not highly schooled, she was a woman of rugged character, who wished for her family usefulness, rectitude of conduct, and a larger measure of opportunity than she herself had had. Both parents were former teachers.

I can truly say that the strongest and most abiding incentive to excellence by which I was ever animated, sprang from that look of solicitude and hope, that heavenly expression of maternal tenderness, when, without the utterance of a single word, my mother has looked into my face, and silently told me that my life was freighted with a two-fold being, for it bore her destiny as well as my own.

There were five children: the oldest, Rebecca, who was pronounced by a governor of Massachusetts to be the best teacher in the world; Thomas Stanley, born December 3, 1788; Stephen, born October 23, 1792; Horace, the subject of our sketch; and Lydia Bishop, the youngest of the family, born July 30, 1798, later a teacher in her native town. During the second decade of his life, young Horace struggled to ward off tuberculosis, a disease to which he had a predisposition.

Reflecting on the town of Franklin in later years, Mann says:



There lived my father, of whom I remember little; and there, too, lived my mother, of whom I not only remember, but of whom, so far as I have any good in me, *I am*. That place, too, has been consecrated by the presence of the purest, sweetest, loveliest being—my wife.

The early educational opportunities were meager, both because of the straitened circumstances of the family and



*From a Drawing in Blake's "A History of the Town of Franklin, Massachusetts"*

BIRTHPLACE OF HORACE MANN

because school facilities were limited. In a letter to a friend in later life Mann lamented:

I regard it as an irretrievable misfortune that my childhood was not a happy one. By nature I was exceedingly elastic and buoyant, but the poverty of my parents subjected me to continual privations. I believe in the rugged nursing of Toil, but she nursed me too much. In the winter time, I was employed in indoor and sedentary occupations, which confined me too strictly; and in summer, when I could work on the farm, the labor was too severe,

and often encroached upon the hours of sleep. I do not remember the time when I began to work. Even my play-hours—not play-days, for I never had any, but my play-hours—were earned by extra exertion, finishing tasks early to gain a little leisure for boyish sports. . . . I have derived one compensation, however, from the rigor of my early lot. Industry or diligence became my second nature, and I think it would puzzle any psychologist to tell where it joined on to the first. Owing to these ingrained habits, work has always been to me what water is to a fish. I have wondered a thousand times to hear people say, “I don’t like this business,” or “I wish I could exchange for that”; for with me whenever I have had anything to do, I do not remember ever to have demurred, but have always set about it like a fatalist; and it was as sure to be done as the sun is to set.

It was necessary for Horace to earn the money with which to buy his schoolbooks. It was the custom of a Franklin store to sell merchandise in exchange for straw braid, just as in later years grocery stores were wont to trade their stocks for butter and eggs or other produce. Mann braided straw and exchanged it for the coveted schoolbooks. Nearby were plants which manufactured bonnets. Wrentham and Franklin became centers of the industry.

The Mann children attended the district common school not far from their farm. The building, enlarged and remodeled, is now used by the town of Franklin. The school “belonged to the smallest district, had the poorest school-house, and employed the cheapest teachers, in a town <sup>1</sup> itself both small and poor.” In common with most other schools of the period, the term was short; up to the age of fifteen, Mann never attended school more than eight or ten weeks a year.

Nor was the teaching inspiring:

<sup>1</sup> The New England town corresponds to the township of the Middle West or West, or to the parish of Louisiana.

What was called the love of knowledge was, in my time, necessarily cramped into a love of books; because there was no such thing as oral instruction. Books designed for children were few, and their contents meagre and miserable. My teachers were very good people, but they were very poor teachers. . . . With the infinite universe around us, all ready to be daguerreotyped upon our souls, we were never placed at the right focus to receive its glorious images. I had an intense natural love of beauty, and of its expression in nature and in the fine arts. . . . How often, when



THE PLAINS SCHOOL ATTENDED BY MANN AS A CHILD

a boy, did I stop, like Akenside's hind, to gaze at the glorious sunset; and lie down upon my back at night, on the earth, to look at the heavens! Yet with all our senses and our faculties glowing and receptive how little were we taught; or rather, how much obstruction was thrust between us and nature's teachings! Our eyes were never trained to distinguish forms and colors. Our ears were strangers to music. . . . Of all our faculties, the memory for words was the only one specially appealed to. The most comprehensive generalizations of men were given us, instead of the facts from which those generalizations were formed. All ideas

outside of the book were contraband articles, which the teacher confiscated, or rather flung overboard. . . .

Yet, with all these obstructions I had a love of knowledge which nothing could repress.

Sterile as his school training was and meager as were the opportunities which his parents could offer him, there was a rich inheritance in the attitudes of his parents towards education. In the same letter to a friend from which the above paragraph is quoted, he writes appreciatively:

. . . if my parents had not the means to give me knowledge, they intensified the love of it. They always spoke of learning and learned men with enthusiasm and a kind of reverence. I was taught to take care of the few books we had, as though there was something sacred about them. I never dog's-eared one in my life, nor profanely scribbled upon the title-pages, margin, or fly-leaf, and would as soon have stuck a pin through my flesh as through the pages of a book. When very young, I remember a young lady came to our house on a visit, who was said to have studied Latin. I looked upon her as a sort of goddess. Years after, the idea that I could ever study Latin broke upon my mind with the wonder and bewilderment of a revelation.

But though there were few books in the Mann family, fortunately the lack was in part supplied by a town library, said to be the first public library in the United States.<sup>2</sup> When the town was named after the American statesman and philosopher, Benjamin Franklin, who was then in Europe, and he was informed of the honor done him, as the town was building a new church, the suggestion was

<sup>2</sup> This claim is disputed. Peterborough, N. H., voted to establish a free town library supported by taxation in 1833. In that town it is asserted that the Franklin library, established in 1786, was given to the parish; as church and town separated when the church was disestablished in Massachusetts, the library remained with the parish, and was not transferred to the town until after the Civil War. (See *The Public Library Bulletin*, Vol. I, no. 1, July, 1901.)



made that a steeple would be added if he would donate a bell for it.

Practically and characteristically he replied that he would give the town a library instead of a bell since he believed "that sense was preferable to sound." The substitute as offered by the eighty-year old sage was accepted. Franklin at once wrote to his friend, Rev. Richard Price of London, asking him to select "a parochial library for the use of a society of intelligent, respectable farmers, such as our country people generally consists of."<sup>3</sup> In due time the library of one hundred and sixteen volumes arrived and was placed in the care of the pastor of the local church, Dr. Emmons, for loaning to members of the community. In 1786, ten years before the birth of Mann, the library was functioning.

In that early day little was thought of adapting knowledge to the age of the learner, and children's books were almost unknown. Mann characterizes Franklin's gift:

Though the library consisted of old histories and theologies, suited "perhaps" to the taste of the "conscript fathers" of the town, but miserably adapted to the "proscript" children, yet I wasted my youthful ardor upon its martial pages and learned to glory in war, which both reason and conscience have since taught me to consider almost universally a crime. . . . Had I the power, I would scatter libraries over the whole land, as the sower sows his wheat field.

Of the original one hundred and sixteen volumes there are still ninety-one preserved in a special case. A random sampling of authors and titles confirms the judgment which Mann passed upon them. Among others are: Humphrey Prideau—*The Old and New Testament Connected in the History of the Jews and Other Nations* (three volumes);

<sup>3</sup> Copy of letter on file at Franklin, Massachusetts, library.



Courtesy Matthew J. Van Leeuwen

FRANKLIN TOWN LIBRARY PRESENTED BY BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Joseph Addison—*The Evidences of the Christian Religion* (one volume); T. Gordon—*The Works of Tacitus with Political Discourses on That Author* (four volumes); *Discipline of the Congregational Church* (one volume); *Life of*

*Cromwell* (two volumes); Robert Fleming—*Fulfilling of the Scriptures* (one volume); S. Stoddard—*The Safety of Appearing at the Day of Judgment* (one volume); Dr. Young—*The Complaint, or Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality* (one volume); *Constitutions in the United States*; John Marchant—*History of the Late Rebellion in Great Britain* (one volume); William Cooper—*The Doctrine of Predestination* (one volume); Rollin—*Ancient History* (one volume); Richard A. Watson—*Collection of Theological Tracts* (five volumes); Baron Montesquieu—*The Spirit of Laws* (two volumes); and Richard Price—*Four Dissertations on Providence, Prayer, Miracles, etc.* (one volume).

The list, comprising sermons, lives of statesmen, constitutions, and laws, is revealing, not only to show what reading young Mann was privileged to have but as indicative of what was considered appropriate for a town library. Yet, doubtless, Mann here received his inspiration, after he became Secretary of the Board of Education, to initiate legislation to make it possible for every school district to have a school library. The pastor of the parish church was custodian.

We have already mentioned two of the sources of Mann's early education, the school and the library. There remains a third, the church. The meetinghouse was no less potent than the schoolhouse. In early New England *the* church, which at this time meant the Congregational church, occupied a dominating position in the community. From the earliest days the church was practically coincident with the town. The pastor controlled the schools as well as the religious life. He examined the teachers and controlled their selection. It was his duty to inspect the schools at times "unexpected by the teacher and pupils" and to examine the "scholars." In the Mann family church attendance was a ritual—almost

a sacrament. An ancestor had given an acre of ground as a site for the church building, and the family owned a pew.

Ministering to the spiritual life of Franklin was the pastor of the orthodox church, Nathaniel Emmons. A graduate of Yale University, he had come to the parish in 1773. In the church with high pulpit, square pews, with special seats for boys in the gallery, he led his flock in worship. Though small in stature, with a voice thin and weak, he nevertheless preached vigorously the tenets of his faith. He was held in high regard by fellow ministers. An energetic student himself, he prepared almost a hundred students as pastors. When in the neighboring towns a stranger inquired the road to Franklin, he was answered: "That road will take you to Dr. Emmons." One reason for the opening of a road to connect with the route from Boston to Providence was that large numbers came to visit the famous clerical leader. When a candidate asked a near-by minister for training, he was urged to go to Dr. Emmons who knew "every rope on the ship." On the occasion of the centennial celebration of the town of Franklin in 1878, Dr. Henry Ward Beecher wrote:

He was a man without clouds. He believed wholly and absolutely what he believed; and what he did not believe had to him no existence. He shot forth from his premises as irresistibly as a ball from the mouth of a cannon. You must stop at the first step, or go with him to the end. What was remarkable was the bravery and honesty with which he accepted every logical result of his thinking, as if the ideas of his brain were the decrees of God, and existed as outward facts.<sup>4</sup>

That his sermons were logical and forceful Mann could testify; but that they were withering and blighting to the

<sup>4</sup> *Franklin Register and Norfolk County Journal*, Franklin, Mass., June 14, 1878.

gentler emotions, he was also convinced. We shall allow him to give his impressions in his own words:

More than by toil, or by the privation of any natural taste, was the inward joy of my youth blighted by theological inculcations. The pastor of the church in Franklin was the somewhat celebrated Dr. Emmons, who not only preached to his people, but ruled them for more than fifty years. He was an extra or hyper-Calvinist—a man of pure intellect, whose logic was never softened in its severity by the infusion of any kindliness of sentiment. He expounded all the doctrines of total depravity, election, and reprobation, and not only the eternity but the extremity of hell torments, unflinchingly and in their most terrible significance, while he rarely if ever descanted upon the joys of heaven, and never, to my recollection, upon the essential and necessary happiness of a virtuous life. Going to church on Sunday was a sort of religious ordinance in our family, and during all my boyhood, I hardly ever remember of staying at home.

It is not necessary to adduce evidence as to whether Dr. Emmons was in fact so severe, or whether such was the effect of his preaching upon Mann only. There were those of his associates who characterized him as cordially receiving the young people in his study and as being affable, genial, and jovial—one who was not unsocial, or austere, or disliked by the young.<sup>5</sup> Miss Catherine Beecher, to some extent, had the same reaction to his sermons as had Mann.<sup>6</sup> But, sensitive in spirit, young Mann was depressed greatly by the sermons. He says that at ten years of age he was familiar with the whole creed and knew all of the arguments by which objections to it were refuted. His faith, as a result of the gloomy religious dogmas with which he was indoctrinated, "spread like a pall of blackness over the whole

<sup>5</sup> BLAKE, MORTIMER—*A History of the Town of Franklin, Massachusetts*, page 85. Franklin, 1879.

<sup>6</sup> STOWE, LYMAN BEECHER—*Saints, Sinners, and Beechers*, pages 88-102. Indianapolis, 1934.



heavens, shutting out every beautiful and glorified thing; while beyond that curtain of darkness," he "could see the bottomless and seething lake, filled with torments, and hear the wailings of its victims." Images of terror haunted him by day as well as by night. Often at night, in imagination, the



*Photo Electrotype Co. Boston*

*From a Drawing in Blake's "A History of the Town of Franklin, Massachusetts"*

#### ORTHODOX CHURCH, FRANKLIN

objects of the day and the faces of friends were replaced by the "vision of the awful throne, the inexorable Judge, and the hapless myriads, among whom I often seemed to see those whom I loved best." Then he would weep and sob until he fell asleep. In this state of mind he remained until he was fourteen years of age. His favorite brother, Stephen, four years his senior, drowned while swimming. He had not

experienced the orthodox form of conversion. Dr. Emmons used the occasion to speak to the young people on the dangers of "dying unconverted," instead of addressing himself to consoling the members of the family. Hearing his mother groan, a sudden change took place in Horace's thinking; he declared *hatred* to a creator as thus pictured. He broke the mental spell which bound him, and "began to construct the theory of Christian Ethics and doctrine respecting virtue and vice, rewards and penalties, time and eternity, God and His providence, which, with such modifications as advancing age and a wider vision must impart, I still retain, and out of which my life has flowed."

But whether in joy or sorrow he had aspirations for the future. Early in life he was to incline towards the motive which was to dominate his life. Writing to a friend about his yearning for knowledge and his interest in educational matters, he exclaims:

I know not how it was its motive never took the form of wealth or fame. It was rather an instinct which impelled toward knowledge as that of a migratory bird impels them northward in spring-time. All my boyish castles in the air had reference to doing something for the benefit of mankind. The early precepts of benevolence, inculcated upon me by my parents, flowed out in this direction; and I had the conviction that knowledge was my needed instrument.

*To do something for mankind*—the humanitarian motive—this was to be the key to his future labors and achievements. To perform his work, it was necessary that he have a college education. To prepare for college he betook himself, first, to the Williams Academy in the town of Wrentham four or five miles from Franklin.<sup>7</sup> William Williams, the

<sup>7</sup> The history of the years between fifteen and twenty are rather obscure. A tablet erected on the site of the academy states that Horace Mann was a pupil. In Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio, is a volume in Mann's

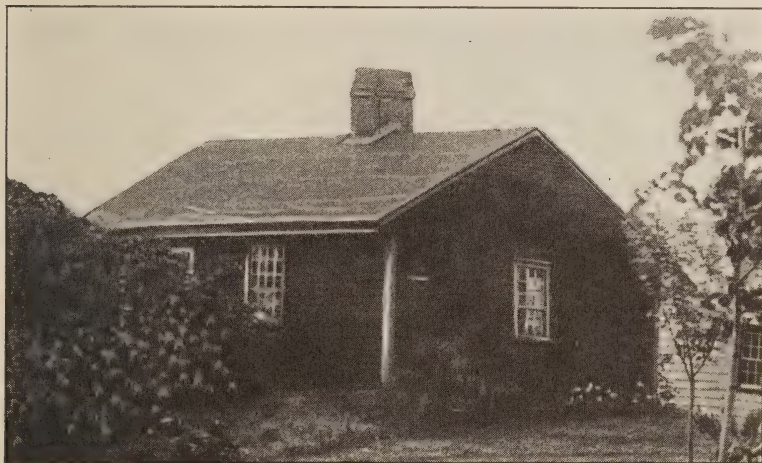
proprietor, for forty-seven years a near neighbor of Dr. Emmons, was a graduate in the first class of Brown University. He had been ordained a Baptist minister and preached in a small church<sup>8</sup> near the academy from the opening of the Revolutionary War until his death in 1823. In the academy two hundred students received an education; eighty of them were fitted for college, which meant for Rhode Island College, later Brown University. While the main college building at Brown was being used as a barracks and later as a hospital for French troops, the college library was brought to the academy for safekeeping. During the period when Mann was a student, Mr. Williams was a fellow of Brown University. The institution attained high rank in its day. It is likely that this influence decided that Mann should enter Brown University; furthermore, of twenty-two persons from the town of Franklin who had attended college, prior to and including 1819, the year Mann graduated from college, sixteen were graduates from Brown.

But at that time the *sine qua non* of entrance to college was a knowledge of the languages. Fortunately an itinerant schoolmaster, Samuel Barrett, came to Franklin; he was a genius, although he was also eccentric and abnormal. Addicted to the bottle, he would lead a sober and temperate life for six months during which time he would teach a term in school; then he would go on a six-months "spree" traveling about the country from house to house, finding lodging and shelter wherever he could, even in barns and pigsties, and begging the hard cider and other intoxicants his abnor-

handwriting, consisting of 161 pages, legal size paper, with all the theorems and proofs of geometry written in it. The flyleaf shows it was completed in Wrentham, Mass., in 1816. The two facts may indicate that a part of the preparation in mathematics was received here.

<sup>8</sup> Horace Mann's father possessed "property and privileges" in this church; in his will made in 1809 these rights were given to his brother and sister.

mal appetite required. He opened a school in Franklin, specializing in English grammar, Latin and Greek. The dead languages he knew "by heart." In conducting the classes in courses preparatory for college, he never took a book in his hand, yet he detected every error a pupil made. Though a genius in language, he was illiterate in mathematics, even in arithmetic. It was impossible for him to commit a multiplication table to memory or even to date a letter. It is said



*Courtesy Mrs. C. H. Sheldon*

WILLIAMS ACADEMY

he could not tell the time of day by the clock. But Mann, in the six months during which he studied, achieved almost unbelievable results. He mastered Latin grammar and read Corderius; Aesop's Fables; The Aeneid with parts from the Georgics and Bucolics; Cicero's Select Orations; the Four Gospels; part of the Epistles in Greek; and part of the Graeca Majora and Minora. Truly almost an unbelievable program, when one considers that present day students feel the burden of mastering one of the courses in a single year!



But all this was done at the expense of his health. As we have seen, during the period from the age of ten until twenty, when he entered college, Mann was fighting off the disposition to tuberculosis of which his father had died. The strain of preparation for college, with the Herculean labors involved, was almost too much for his frail strength.

These early years had been years of trial and exertion, of struggle and disappointment, of religious gloom and triumph, of poor health. But, too, they were years of aspiration, of striving, of ambition. During these years Mann's personal habits were above reproach. In later life he writes:

As to my early habits, whatever may have been my shortcomings, I can still say that I have always been exempt from what may be called common vices. I was never intoxicated in my life; unless, perchance with joy and anger. I never swore; indeed, profanity was always most disgusting and repulsive to me. And (I consider it always a climax) I never used the "vile weed" in any form. I early formed the resolution to be a slave to no habit. For the rest, my public life is almost as well known to others as to myself.

He did everything with meticulous care and accuracy. Two pen drawings <sup>9</sup> at the age of fifteen show the beauty of his written work. Even more painstakingly done are two textbooks—one on arithmetic, a volume of more than two hundred pages written when he was sixteen; the other, a geometry, made when he was twenty. The writing and drawings are as beautiful as an engraved plate.

At twenty years of age Mann was ready to enter upon his college experience. It was to be at Brown, the college of one of his instructors and of many of his friends and acquaintances, only twenty miles from home, that he was to have the larger world of higher education unfolded to him.

<sup>9</sup> Now preserved in Boston Public Library.



## CHAPTER II

### THE COLLEGE STUDENT

**B**ROWN UNIVERSITY, only a score of miles distant, was a small college. It was founded in the pioneer days by plain orthodox people in a new and sparsely inhabited country. Harvard and Yale already had great prestige and were attracting men of wealth. Amherst had just been founded by the Congregationalists of Massachusetts. In 1802 Asa Messer had been chosen the third president of Brown, a post he occupied until 1826. Soon after the institution was founded the Revolutionary War was fought leaving the poor supporters still more impoverished. Students were from the middle and lower classes, the small merchants, mechanics and farmers, of the near-by areas. President Messer had meager funds at his disposal and a single pre-Revolutionary building which served to house classrooms and dormitory rooms for students, and he was forced to accept such students as came.

President Messer was a liberal in his views, a circumstance which was later to cost him his administrative post. Under his leadership, Brown, in spite of its financial limitations and straitened income, became a great school. His own good sense, balance, and accurate scholarship became ideals for the students. The students were inspired to mental independence and self-reliance. A renowned department of English provided effective training in composition and oratory. Literary societies were molders of thought and opinion and furnished the arenas in which views might be clari-

fied through expression. As was usual in literary societies of the day, the two literary societies of Brown had large libraries. Here much reading was done and here orations, essays, and debates were a training for effective public expression.

Mann at once became a member of the *United Society of Brothers*, one of the literary groups. He frequently appeared on its programs. In these post-Revolutionary days, political and economic discussion was at white heat. In these Mann was a willing and enthusiastic participant. Among the titles of papers which are preserved are "Separation of Church and State," "Immigration," "Lessons of European Politics," "On Foreigners in the United States," and "American Genius." He orated in behalf of the establishment of a national university, on the study of mathematics, against fiction, against undignified criticism of the press, and on love of fame. He discoursed on the "Good Offices of Passion," "The Uses of Genius and Application" and on the "Benefactors of the Revolution."

At "exhibition" programs, to which the general public was invited, he discussed such subjects as the "American Navy" and the "Congress of Vienna." His flair for subjects of public interest appears again and again in his reading and study. Fundamental problems of state occupied his attention. Abiding principles rather than detailed facts enthralled him. A notebook in English which remains from his college days shows the development of the idea of liberty.

The record of his borrowings from the library shows that his chief interest was in poetry and history. During his sophomore year he read five volumes of history; during his junior year, four volumes of history and poetry. During his senior year he was loaned ten volumes.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The library records of Brown University show the following borrowings while he was a student: March 1, 1817, Hume's History of England, three volumes; April 12, 1817, French Revolution; April 26, 1817, French Revo-

Notwithstanding the fact that Mann was handicapped by going into an advanced class when he entered college, he soon won his spurs and proved his merit as a student. It was not long before he attained the highest rank in his class. A college mate says that he never heard a student translate the Greek and Roman classics with greater facility, accuracy, and elegance, although his interest in college veered towards



UNIVERSITY HALL, BROWN UNIVERSITY  
MANN LIVED IN ROOM 30 ON THE TOP FLOOR  
- ABOVE THE DOOR ON THE RIGHT

science. He developed an excellent style which was to serve him well in later life.

In the early nineteenth century, it was the practice of New England colleges to have a long vacation in the fall and winter to give the students an opportunity to earn money  
lution; October 10, 1817, *History of America*, one volume; November 14, 1817, *Buchanan's Researches*; April 17, 1818, *Jefferson's Notes*; April 24, 1817, *Pope's Works*, volume one; August 20, 1818, *Reid's Works*, volume one; October, 1818, *Gray's Poems*, volume one; December 11, 1818, *Cur-ray's Speeches*, volume one; December 19, 1818, *Plutarch's Lives*, volumes one and two; February 27, 1819, *Allison on Taste*; March 30, 1819, *Shakespeare*, volume five; April 9, 1819, *Johnson's Lives*, volume four; April 23, 1819, *Adventurer*, volumes one and two.

to pursue their education the rest of the year. Many did this by teaching school. During his vacation periods Mann taught three successive years in large district schools. But like modern college students, he was forced to "write home" for money; records are extant of notes given to his sister, Lydia, for several hundred dollars, even in that day of low rates for board and room and for tuition fees. Tuition was \$4.00 a quarter, room rent \$1.45, and library fees 50 cents. Board was \$2.25 a week.

In semiserious, semifacetious mood he writes to his sister:

If the children of Israel were pressed for "gear" half so hard as I have been, I do not wonder that they were willing to worship a golden calf. It is a long, long time since my last ninepence bade good-by to its brethren; and I suspect that the last two parted on no very friendly terms, for they have never since met together. Poor wretches! never did two souls stand in greater need of mutual support and consolation. . . . For several weeks past I have been in a half-delirious state on account of receiving no intelligence from home. . . . For a good part of the time, I have been trying the experiment with respect to money which ended so tragically in the case of the old man's horse.

The strenuous application to his college studies told on his all-too-meager health. Never having entirely overcome the tendency towards ill health which he had inherited from his father, and having weakened his already frail nature by his extraordinary exertions in preparing for college, Mann's physical reserve was never high. It was weakened further by continuous application to his college duties and by his exertions in teaching school. Impressed by the importance of the opportunities which were his, he labored incessantly at his studies, denying himself needed exercise and rest; he never recovered in later life the vigor of body which had been so severely depleted by his conscientious application to his du-

ties. Having only six months in which to prepare for college, he necessarily worked long and intense hours to master his studies. At the end of the first year he was almost completely prostrated by illness.

During his college years he frequently visited his home. The young man, away for an extended stay, after the protection of his parental roof, is awakened to reflection. Soon after entering college for the first time in 1816, he appreciatively wrote his mother:

No circumstance, however pleasing, or situation, however agreeable, seems to me sufficient to form a substitute for the guardian care of a parent, the enjoyments that arise from the society of kindred, and the fond endearments of a parental home.

Numerous letters bear witness to the attachment which he felt for the members of his family.

It has already been noted that a revulsion against his early religious training had occurred. When he came to Brown he entered a college founded in a liberal tradition. No religious tests were required, and all students were allowed free liberty of conscience. The spirit of Roger Williams, the founder, stalked in the state and in its institutions. All positions at Brown, except that of the presidency, were open to all denominations; during Mann's stay the leaning of the president was towards liberal thought. But the college itself, as was Mann, was deeply religious in tone and spirit. Revival services which were held at the institution were attended by Mann and his roommate. In his writings of college days, Mann attacked infidelity, and he never could get entirely away from his Puritan ancestry and early education. Influenced by the writings of the French reformers and revolutionists and by the classical authors, he became a believer in Cicero's deism.



Mann was not a recluse who was unpopular with his fellow students. A classmate, Ira Moore Barton, with whom Mann roomed during the last two years of his college course, writes:

My chum possessed qualities of a high order. By this means he attracted and secured the respect, not only of the members of our own class, but of members of the other classes in college. Our room was the centre of much good company, except in study hours; and I sometimes almost wished that I had not so interesting and attractive a roommate. But I felt much more than compensated by his intelligence, and by the fact that the company his genial manners invited were from amongst the best young men in the college.

Barton was a friend from the time they entered college together in 1816. During the last two years they were chums, sharing Room 30 in University Hall. Both were mature in years. Both had lived in the country and so they had common interests. For this reason they were not attracted either by the dissipations of the college or the city. Writing further of Mann, Barton states: "During the three years of our college life, I recollect not a single instance of impropriety on his part."

But his youthful exuberance was evident in several incidents. The students had long been in the habit of having a Fourth of July celebration in the chapel of the college. The students had made arrangements for the celebration, but for some reason the faculty decided to omit it. A majority of the students advocated proceeding with the celebration despite the faculty pronouncement. Mann had been chosen orator of the day, and being somewhat impulsive he joined the ranks of the celebrators. A procession formed on the college campus, entered the chapel, and Mann delivered the traditional oration amidst great applause from his associates.

For this infringement of discipline a small fine was imposed on the orator, but he lost caste neither with faculty nor students as a result of it.

On another occasion the president came to his room where the boys were having a rather noisy session, as college students occasionally did and do. The president stood just near the door so that no one could escape. Like a flash, Mann blew out the light, made a dash for the feet of the president, pushed them apart, and crept through. Thrown off balance, the president was occupied in keeping from falling while Mann and his companions made good their escape. It was never mentioned by the president; but he could not prevent a smile the first few times he saw Mann after the incident.

Mann was a welcome visitor in the president's house. It was here that he first met the president's daughter, Charlotte, thirteen years his junior, being only ten years of age when he graduated at the age of twenty-three. She shed tears when he departed from college.

His faithfulness to college duties is seen in the fact that he was chosen valedictorian of his college class when he graduated in 1819. His subject, as the college orator, is prophetic of his future interest and of the work to which his energies were to be devoted in later life. He chose as his subject, "The Gradual Advancement of the Human Species in Dignity and Happiness." He pictured the condition of a society when education shall develop people to a higher stage, when more wisdom and virtue will be found, when philanthropy will provide for the wants and relieve the woes of men, and when free institutions will abolish oppression and war. It is significant that Mann, the philanthropist, was thus early starting on the career which was to mean so much to his own generation and the generations following. From

the French revolutionists he had imbibed the doctrine of the perfectibility of man; he was willing to spend his life in assisting to advance his own race in the full belief that, were the proper instrument found, it could cure all social ills.

As young men in college approach the end of their college careers they are confronted with the problem of choosing a vocation. In Mann's day the future seemed brightest in the ministry or in law. Until the early nineteenth century the ministry furnished the greatest opportunity for service and influence in the community. Recently, however, the church had been disestablished, church and state were separated, and lawyers were taking the ascendancy in influence among the professions. The advocate's career became almost a *sine qua non* for public and political life. The early experiences which Mann had had with religion would not attract him in the direction of the ministry, nor would his views make him acceptable to most churches of the day. His logical mind, his interest in governmental principles, his experiences as a student tended to lead him towards the legal profession.

Six weeks before his graduation, therefore, and immediately after the final examinations of the senior class, Mann entered his name as a student of law in the office of a Wrentham lawyer, Hon. J. J. Fiske. Being only four miles from his home, this seemed to offer an opportunity to spend the three years reading law in a lawyer's office required by the statutes; during the summer and fall Mann pursued his studies in this quiet and peaceful New England town.

Mr. Fiske was a graduate of Brown University where he was a classmate and friend of William L. Marcy, later governor of New York. He had studied law in Providence and Boston and soon enjoyed an extensive practice. His office at Wrentham became a Mecca for students of law; few law-

yers not connected with a law school have directed the legal preparation of a greater number of prospective lawyers.

But scarcely was he fairly launched upon his preparation for a career in law, when a call came to him from his *alma mater* to join the staff of instructors at Brown University. On New Year's day, 1820, a letter came from President Messer, inviting him to become a tutor, at a salary of \$350 a year. His first impulse was to accept the position and he tentatively agreed to do so if health, "which during the last part of my residence in town was to me nothing but a name, but is now much improved," allowed. Later he changed his mind and declined the position, but being again urged by President Messer, and through the intervention of a friend who urged him to reconsider, he determined to accept the position. This he did on February nine.

His chosen professional interest was to be held in abeyance for two years. He was successful as a teacher. While he was in college he had excelled in scientific studies. He now had the opportunity to improve his knowledge of the classics. He devoted himself most earnestly to Latin and Greek. In his classes he always demanded translations in good and elegant English. He demanded appreciation of the meaning of the translation and secured it by insisting on care in choosing the proper word from a group of synonyms. Inspiration and enthusiasm resulted from the frequent geographical, biographical, and historical materials which clarified and enlivened the teaching. The students did not find him an "easy mark." It is reported that one day a student asked the steward of the college what he was going to do with a medicinal preparation which he had. "Mr. So and So," said the steward, "has a violent attack of fever, and I am going to give him a sweat." "If you want to give him a sweat," said the inquirer, "send him into our recitation

without his lesson." Mann demanded of others the same high standards which he set for himself.

Certain unpleasant conditions in the institution made it disagreeable for the members of the faculty. This, together with the interest which he felt in law, made Mann determine to resume the studies which had been interrupted when he accepted his tutorship.



### CHAPTER III

## LITCHFIELD AND LAW

IN seeking a school in which to pursue his legal studies, Mann communicated with a number of his friends. Several of them recommended the Litchfield law school at Litchfield, Connecticut. One of them, then a student, speaking in the highest terms of the instructor of the school, seriously advised him to come and to pursue his law course. In a letter to Mann he said:

Everything is legal and subordinate to the study of law. Law is the prevailing fashion. The minister will pray for you as the law directs; the merchant will cheat you as the law directs; the student will get drunk according to the precise letter of the Statute in such case made and provided; there is not a girl in town who has not read enough law to understand and in some cases to practice on the doctrine of entails and inheritance as consequent thereupon.

Law indeed dominated Litchfield. The law school created by Tapping Reeve, a brother-in-law of Aaron Burr, who was his first pupil in 1775, during the early years of our national life was the chief school in our country devoted to training lawyers.<sup>1</sup> The first recitations were conducted in Tapping Reeve's home, but by 1784 the number of pupils had increased to such an extent that the proprietor was forced to

<sup>1</sup> These and other facts relating to the school may be found in a pamphlet entitled *The Litchfield School, 1775-1883*, published by the Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut by the Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1933.

erect a small frame building<sup>2</sup> twenty by twenty-two feet, for their accommodations. In this school building near his house he held his classes consisting of from ten to twenty students, and here he housed his law library. In 1820 Tapping Reeve withdrew from connection with the school, which was then taken over by one of his former pupils, Judge James Gould, a graduate with highest honors from Yale college. During the period of Mann's attendance, Gould



TAPPING REEVE HOUSE (*right*)  
LITCHFIELD LAW SCHOOL (*left*)

was the sole proprietor of the school. He was assisted in instruction by two younger men who later became senator from Connecticut and chief justice of the state respectively.

The oldest law school in the country, it surpassed all others of the day in renown and influence. It already had an extensive reputation before Harvard established a professorship of law in 1815 and before Kent began his per-

<sup>2</sup> The home of Tapping Reeve and the law building are now owned by the Litchfield Historical Society and are open to the public. An interesting exhibit relative to the history of the school may be seen.

manent work at Columbia college. A register of the students kept from 1798 to 1833 shows approximately eight hundred names in the various classes. Together with about two hundred who had attended the school in the earlier days, more than one thousand attorneys were trained there. The association with the colleges of the day was close. More than two hundred Yale graduates studied law in Litchfield, more than fifty from Princeton, thirty-five from Harvard, and more than twenty each from Brown, Dartmouth, Williams, and Columbia. Most of the states had names on the student rolls, while Connecticut, as might have been expected, furnished more than any other state. New York and Massachusetts furnished more than one hundred, seventy came from Georgia, forty-five from South Carolina, and thirty-seven from Maryland. Such a remote state as Louisiana contributed seven students to the rolls, and names were listed from Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky. The Middle West, *then* the Far West, furnished its contingent from Ohio, Indiana, and Missouri.

The classes varied in size from year to year. The era of greatest prosperity was probably during the fifty years after 1810. The incoming class in 1823 was composed of forty-four students. Mann, who attended during the latter part of this period, was a student during the school's greatest prosperity. An appreciation of the size of the school may be had when it is remembered that the graduates of Yale from 1809 to 1826 numbered about one thousand one hundred sixty-seven; of Harvard, one thousand sixty-six; of Princeton, six hundred forty-two; of Williams, three hundred sixty-eight. During the same period five hundred sixty-six men attended the law school.

The success of the students was remarkable and often distinguished; they filled important posts in the affairs of

their local communities and of the state and nation. Two students were vice-presidents of the United States, Aaron Burr and John C. Calhoun. Three were justices of the United States Supreme Court, and six were cabinet officers. One hundred sixteen later entered the United States Congress, ninety as representatives and twenty-six as senators. Sixteen became state governors while seventeen served as members of the supreme courts of their states, of whom ten were chief justices. Five became college presidents. Others were prominent in literature, journalism, art, and the world of business.

Thus it was that Litchfield, an isolated village to which access was gained over rough roads, by horseback, or stage coach, drew to it such a large number of enterprising men of the day. In a letter to his sister Mann describes his own arrival from Hartford by sleigh. The curriculum was comprehensive and was divided into forty-eight titles and subjects. Since no set sequence of studies was required, students could enter at any time. Gould himself lectured an hour and a quarter each day, with the exception of Sunday, the students taking notes on the lecture. On Saturday afternoons examinations were conducted covering the week's work. In a letter home to his sister early in 1822 Mann tells her that he is writing ten pages a day in close lines in law.

The instruction was not exclusively academic. Every Monday evening was devoted to a "moot court." Here students argued typical hypothetical cases before a justice and court consisting of fellow pupils. The decision was reviewed by Gould or some other lawyer. Customarily two students were assigned to each side of the case and a clerk of the court kept accurate records of the arguments and decisions.

In this connection an interesting anecdote is told of Mann. The court had been organized with Mr. Gould *ex officio* as

judge. Mann had been elected by the students to the next highest office, that of attorney-general. On one occasion when his side of the case was opposed to the interpretation which had been rendered by the judge, it was the consensus of opinion of the students that Mr. Mann had the superior argument in the case. Apparently the judge realized this, for after he read the arguments to sustain his own view, he attacked some of the points made by Mann with unusual vigor and with some show of resentment.

At this time, as on other occasions, the arguments of Mann were lucid, cogent, and logical. The distinctions which he drew were clear and his analogies apt and telling.

A fellow student, writing of the impression which Mann had made upon him at the law school, said that he parted from him at Litchfield "with the full conviction that his was to be one of the great names of our time, whether his clear and fertile intellect should confine itself—as was not probable—to the law, or any other one department of human knowledge." He had made an excellent record as a student and had won the respect of his teachers and fellow students.

That he was not somber or gloomy and that he was popular with the students were shown by the general opinion that he was the best fellow and best wit among them. He was also considered the best whist player, as well as the best scholar and best lawyer of the school. A quarter of a century later a fellow student, then a prominent attorney of Toledo, Ohio, in a letter reminded him of the scuffle in which he had had his coat back torn up to the collar.

It is highly probable that a number of the humanitarian projects in which Mann was interested later had their origin in this early period. Soon after his arrival at Litchfield there appeared in the *Providence Patriot* an article signed "An Enemy to the Extension of Slavery" written by Mann and



addressed to the Republicans of Rhode Island. In it he states:

We avow our eternal abhorrence at the servitude of any portion of the species and affirm it to be the duty of every man, as far as in him lies, to circumscribe the extension of this created enormity.

While Mann was at Litchfield the famous minister and temperance reformer, Lyman Beecher, was pastor, having come to the Litchfield Congregational Church at the invita-



LITCHFIELD LAW SCHOOL—FIRST LAW SCHOOL IN AMERICA

tion of Judge Reeve of the law school. In 1821 Reverend Beecher was chairman of the committee of the Congregational ministers of Connecticut which adopted a long list of recommendations on temperance. The American temperance movement was launched; Beecher considered the report the most important paper he had ever read. In his preaching he remembered that his audience was composed in large part of students from the law school who were sons of the first families of the country and graduates of the first colleges;

the pupils of the female seminary of the town were also from the first families from all over the country. Mann, in common with other students, listened to his preaching and wrote home to his sister, Lydia, saying he had supposed Beecher "a rigid hidebound Calvinist" who had all the bigotry of most Orthodox ministers of Connecticut, but he declares that he is more liberal in his principles than his denomination is in general and that his eminent powers of mind would make any doctrine interesting. The first sermon he heard from his lips was a word picture of the terrible doom of those who do not do their duty. Although the sermon produced an intense effect on his feelings, it did not change his belief. Certain it is that Mann became greatly interested in the temperance movement; it is certain, too, that Mann retained a friendship with the daughter, Catherine Beecher, and with Harriet Beecher Stowe. At the inception of the temperance reform it was, of course, customary for men to drink, though they often did so in moderation. The papers which have been preserved indicate that Mann purchased wine while a student in the law school; he himself says that as a member of the legislature, many Boston men "dined" him and forced him to drink wine as he had not then the "full grace of a teetotaler." Even the ministers drank. They were in politics; at election time the clergy walked in the procession, smoked pipes, and drank. They also decided who should be nominated as state officers. The lawyers opposed them and defeated the blue-law candidates that the clergy supported, thereby wresting control of the state offices from them. Lyman Beecher thought that this was the most salutary thing that ever happened to the state of Connecticut, because it cut the churches loose from dependence on state support and threw them entirely on their own responsibility and resources. Beecher, full of

the spirit of reform, also preached against the slave trade and later as a minister in Boston counted William Lloyd Garrison among his parishioners.

During his residence at the law school Mann was deeply interested in metaphysics, especially in Brown's works in that field.

Not yet having completed the three years study in a law office required by the state laws and seeking a location for his practice, early in 1823 Mr. Mann went into the office of the Honorable James Richardson of Dedham, a town with a population of about twenty-five hundred on the stage line between Boston and Providence. Dedham, being on the main route of traffic between two important cities, and an important station, sometimes had as many as twelve stage-coaches draw up for their passengers to eat breakfast. In the summer wealthy families from Boston came there for their vacations. By locating here, not only would Mann be able to study in the office of a noted lawyer and judge, but after his admission to the bar, he would be prepared to establish himself in a prosperous and growing community. He studied law, as he did everything, intensively, and labored regularly eighteen hours a day. In December, 1823, he was admitted to the Norfolk bar. He opened an office of his own and at once met with unusual success.

Mr. Livingston, author of the *American Portrait Gallery*, describes his legal record intimately:

We believe the records of the courts will show, that, during the fourteen years of his forensic practice, he gained at least four out of five of all the contested cases in which he was engaged. The inflexible rule of his professional life was, never to undertake a case that he did not believe to be right. He held that an advocate loses his highest power when he loses the ever-conscious conviction that he is contending for the truth; that though the fees or fame

may be a stimulus, yet that a conviction of being right is itself *creative* of power, and renders its possessor more than a match for antagonists otherwise greatly his superior. He used to say that in this conscious conviction of right there was a magnetism; and he only wanted an opportunity to be *put in communication* with a jury in order to impregnate them with his own belief. Beyond this, his aim always was, before leaving any head or topic in his argument, to condense its whole force into a vivid epigrammatic point, which the jury could not help remembering when they got into the jury-room; and, by graphic illustration and simile, to fasten pictures upon their minds, which they would retain and reproduce after abstruse arguments were forgotten. He endeavored to give to each one of the jurors something to be "quoted" on his side, when they retired for consultation. He argued his cases as though he were in the jury-room itself, taking part in the deliberations that were to be held there. From the confidence in his honesty, and those pictures with which he filled the air of the jury-room, came his uncommon success.

His lifelong views, as embodied in his practice, were expressed to a law student who wrote to him as a member of Congress asking his views on the study and practice of law (1852).

Never espouse the wrong side of a cause knowingly; and if, unwittingly, you find yourself on the wrong side, leap out of it as quick as you would jump out of a vat of boiling brimstone, should you accidentally fall into one. . . . I would rather be at the head of Falstaff's soldiers, than to have my name go down in the law books attached to any argument which any fair-minded man could believe to have been insincere.

I well know, for I have often heard, what the old lawyers say about its being right to defend a known wrong side. I deny it all and despise it. If a bad man wants such work done, he shall not have my soul to do it with. . . .

I recollect having once drawn a writ, and after it was entered in court, and became so far a matter of record, I had a doubt about the sufficiency of a statement on a single point. I asked a



brother lawyer, in confidence, whether he thought the writ to be abatable, or demurrable, on that account. "Why don't you alter it?" he whispered to me, "nobody will ever know it." "*But I shall know it myself,*" was my spontaneous reply. This anecdote, whose egotism, if it has any, you will pardon, will explain what I mean.

His philosophy of the legal profession was clearly and succinctly put in the Baccalaureate Address to the graduating class at Antioch College (Dec. 15, 1858).

The function of the Legal Profession is to organize Righteousness in the transactions and relations of men. . . . A true judge is a vice-regent of God upon earth, and true lawyers are his ministers. . . . A lawyer's office ought to be only a sacred avenue leading to the sanctuary of the court, from which every crime-proposing client should be scourged away as if he carried the plague in his garments. The investigations and scrutinies of a court are designed for moral filtration, and if lies and frauds and prejudices and oppressions ever enter at one end of the Court-room, they should be arrested and sluiced off into the cesspool of Tophet, so that only the sweet and holy stream of equity and truth shall flow out of the other end. . . . A lawyer ought never to espouse or prosecute a cause in order that plaintiff or defendant may prevail, but only in order that justice may be done. . . . Every lawyer who knowingly screens the guilty or defends the unjust becomes an accessory after the fact. He adopts the wrong, and, by adopting, re-commits it.

Previous to his removal to take up his residence in Dedham, Mann took little direct interest in public affairs, although he had for some years concerned himself with the theoretical aspects of public life and with the problems of government. Until the time of President Monroe's administration, he was not old enough to vote. Then for five years he was at Brown University as a student and tutor and for the following twelve or fifteen months at Litchfield, Connecticut, in the law school. It was natural that he should become



interested in politics after he was admitted to the bar, and he soon had opportunities to present himself before the public in his district.

In 1823 he was invited to deliver the Fourth of July address at Dedham. Here, as in all his later major public utterances, he dealt with fundamental principles. A contrast was drawn between the basic philosophies underlying the governments of the Old World and those of America. In the former, he found power based upon birth rather than merit; moral influence directed towards conquest and domination and vanity of titles irrespective of talents and virtues; penal retribution in the hands of religious leaders rather than of the State; power maintained by large standing armies; and a national debt bearing a high rate of interest. By such means the people were kept in subjection to their rulers. By contrast, he found that the liberties of America could be preserved only by the intelligence of the people, saying: "Intelligence, like the blood sprinkled upon the doorposts of the Hebrew houses, will prevent the destroying angel of despotism from entering." A second means of preserving freedom was, he urged, through the conscientious use of the elective franchise. Religious freedom is essential, he says in closing, paying a tribute to those "who contended against all the bigotry and intolerance of their own times for religious freedom and rights of conscience; and who by their exertions, revived the palsied arm and relieved the scaled eye of reason, *Williams, Penn, and Oglethorpe*."

This oration attracted the attention of the statesman, John Quincy Adams, who predicted that its author would have a most distinguished career. A publisher of a paper in Dedham wrote in his journal: "It was a masterly production, and was worthy the head and heart of an American free-man."

His first active political endeavor was in the fall of 1824 when he espoused the cause of John Quincy Adams, candidate for the Presidency of the United States. In later elections he allied himself with the National Republican party, and after it had disappeared, with the Whigs.

In the fall of 1825 he was invited by his literary society at Brown University, the *United Brothers Society*, to give the annual oration. In it he argued for reliance upon reason as the solver of individual and societal problems. "The fundamental maxim of true education is, not so much to inculcate opinions, and belief, as to impart the means of their formation," he announces. How modern this sounds to us a century later! In college his leading enthusiasm had been in the field of science, rather than in the classics. The former he considered the work of God himself, the latter merely the accounts of the myths of men. At this early date there was laid the foundation of a view which was to dominate his life and work.

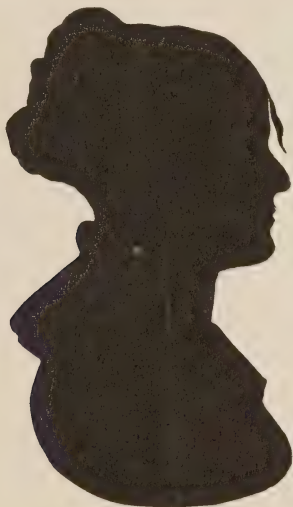
Again in July, 1826, Mann had the opportunity of presenting himself before his fellow townsmen of Dedham. Ex-presidents Adams and Jefferson had died on the previous Fourth of July, and eulogies had been pronounced on them in most of the towns and cities of the United States. The town invited Mann to deliver an address in their honor. Leading the procession preceding the ceremonies were President John Quincy Adams, son of the deceased second president; the president's brother; and two nephews. President Adams pronounced Mann's oration as being one "of splendid composition and eloquence."

Increasingly prominent, Mann was admitted as an attorney before the court of common pleas in 1827 and the following year before the supreme judicial court.

Social reforms could not fail to attract one with human-

itarian views such as he had. A sturdy advocate of temperance, he was elected president of the temperance society of Dedham. Though in early days he had used a very little wine, when he entered political life, he violated political etiquette by refusing to treat; but he gave a larger sum for charitable purposes than treating would have cost him.

As soon as he was eligible to election, he became a member



*Courtesy Alumni Office, Brown University*

SILHOUETTE OF CHARLOTTE MESSER MANN—HORACE MANN'S FIRST WIFE

of the Dedham School Committee. He delivered public addresses on education, wrote for the newspapers, attempted to improve the teaching profession, to increase the salaries, and to elevate the calling of the teachers in social regard. He visited many schools, and read on education more widely than in any other field. As a legislator he saw more clearly than ever before the importance of education, particularly in a republican country where men were self-controlled and their energies directed by their own free-will.

On May 7, 1827, Mann was elected a representative from Dedham to the general court; he served in this capacity until 1833, when he removed to Boston. His legislative record must be deferred until a later chapter.

At Brown University, it has been said in a previous chapter, Mann formed a deep attachment for Charlotte Messer, daughter of the president. He had retained his affection for her during all the years since graduation. He had now paid the debts incurred in getting an education; had attained considerable success in the practice of law; and had acquired a small competence. He could now fulfill his dream of marriage. On September 30, 1830, the wedding occurred. His wife, now a young woman of twenty-one, was a person of rare traits of character and of beautiful qualities of mind and heart. She was in poor health and called forth his tenderest and most solicitous care. She warmly approved his dreams and plans for ameliorating the ills of society. There was a radiant optimism in her religion. Mann was given to rhetorical and exaggerated statement and the use of impassioned language, but never were his statements more impassioned than when he recorded his thoughts regarding his wife, Charlotte. He says:

"She was all my eye desired of outward beauty, all that my imagination had ever conceived of spiritual grace and loveliness, all that my conscientiousness ever delineated of truth and fidelity. Not a shade of envy ever crossed the sunny expanse of her mind; not a breath of selfishness ever cooled the warmth of her affection. Her virtues were my admiration while she lived. God grant that in some limited measure, they may be my example, now that she is no more upon earth."

To him she was the "purest, loveliest being, whose brightness was ever shrouded in mortality." During the short two years that he spent with her before her death,

"There was a light upon earth brighter than any light of the sun, and a voice sweeter than any of nature's harmonies. . . . She purified my conception of purity, and beautified the ideal of every excellence. I never knew her to express a selfish or envious thought; nor do I believe that the type of one was ever admitted to disturb the peacefulness of her bosom. . . . There was in her breast no scorn of vice, but a wonder and amazement that it could exist . . . it was more in pity than in indignation that she regarded it. . . . But I must forbear; for I should never end were I to depict the revelation of moral beauties which beamed from her daily life, or attempt to describe that grace of sentiment, that loveliness of feeling, which played perpetually, like lambent flame, around the solid adamant of her virtues."

She was a perpetual stimulation to bring out the best in Mann. He found himself as never before. He describes the emotions which had taken possession of him:

"My life went out of myself. One after another, the feelings which before had been fastened upon other objects loosened their strong grasp, and went to dwell and rejoice in the sanctuary of her holy and beautiful nature. Ambition forgot the applause of the world for the most precious congratulations of that approving voice. Joy ceased its conquests abroad; for at home there was an exhaustless fountain to slake its renewing thirst. There imagination built her palaces, and garnered her choicest treasures. She, too, supplied me with new strength for toil and new motives for excellence. Within her influence, there could be no contest for sordid passions or degrading appetites; for she sent a divine and overmastering strength into every generous sentiment, which I cannot describe."

An intimate friend of the Manns confirms the influence upon Mann's character and his buoyancy during this period.

"How brilliant he was in general conversation! with such sparkling repartee, such gushing wit, such a merry laugh, but never any nonsense. His droll sayings could never be recalled without exciting a hearty laugh at their originality. . . . And then how



much power he had of drawing out other minds! The timid ones, who usually hardly dared express themselves on grave and weighty topics, would rise from a tete-a-tete with him, wondering at the amount of talent, thought and feeling he had opened, and the chord of sympathy he had touched. He was a *radiant* man then . . . and the truth and honor and disinterestedness and earnestness of his whole character, with his warmth of heart, and his love of race, and the intensity which was so marked in every thing which he did and said, made themselves very apparent in familiar and easy talk on every imaginable subject."

But his joy was to be short-lived. Her frail body was not equal to the struggle with life. In the early summer of 1832, she was ill; Mann wrote to his family that he did not expect an early recovery. For six weeks she gradually grew worse and worse, her illness becoming more and more serious. Alone Mann sat by her bedside during the last night, watched her pass into a delirium, until, in the early hours, she had passed away. The next morning friends found him nearly insensible from grief. They feared for his reason. They visited him, advised him, and attempted to divert his mind from his sorrow. The gloom and doubt of his boyhood days of religious difficulty returned to haunt him. On every anniversary of her death Mann shut himself away from all friends and relived the events of that night of despair. A few weeks after her death he wrote: "Were it not for the stern duty of living, I could readily part with life and . . . repose with her in the oblivion of the grave. . . . But there is duty from which we are not permitted to escape. I must live on. . . ." His letters and his journal give abundant testimony to the sincerity and weight of his sorrow. On the fifth anniversary of her death he writes in his journal: ". . . the days and years that have since passed so slowly away, have been full of a history of suffering such as no mortal pen can

ever record." A few months afterwards he states what was one motive in his educational endeavors: "One thing alone remains to build the foundations of my happiness, upon what the tide of time cannot sweep away. Personal good—benefit to myself in its common acceptance—must be abandoned, and I must see, if in seeking the good of others, I cannot create and perpetuate a cause of rejoicing. . . ."

His friends saw the need of a change of scene, and of new interests. Edward G. Loring, a class-mate at the Litchfield Law School, since graduation practicing in Boston, persuaded him to come to that city and join him in a law partnership. His association with Loring was a great boon to him. Loring was a man of great nobility of character, of substantial moral worth, and steadfast and true to his friends. He had legal ability of high order, later being selected as a lecturer on law at Harvard University. The personal relationship between him and Mann grew ever more and more intimate; they were close and devoted friends; during the tragic years when necessity forced Mann to live in his own law office, he was a regular Sunday visitor at Mr. Loring's home. Strongly antislavery, Loring without doubt had a decided effect upon the development of Mann's thought on this growing problem of the day. Loring was a double cousin of Charles G. Loring who at the time had perhaps the largest law practice in Boston. He was a friend of many influential people in Boston, to whom he was delighted to introduce his new partner.

Already known in Boston, Mann had little difficulty in establishing a lucrative legal practice. He had been elected a member of the house of representatives from the town of Dedham. Scarcely had he established himself in Boston in 1833, when he was elected as a member of the senate from Suffolk County. We must now turn to his legislative career.

## CHAPTER IV

### A DECADE IN THE LEGISLATURE

IN 1827 Mr. Mann was elected to the General Court of Massachusetts as representative for the town of Dedham. He was re-elected to the house each year until he was chosen senator in 1833. He served in the senate four years, the last two as president of that body. Throughout his legislative career, he was a respected, energetic, and influential member of those bodies. He had the viewpoint of a statesman rather than that of the politician. He estimates his own motives during his legislative career, some years later,<sup>1</sup> as follows:

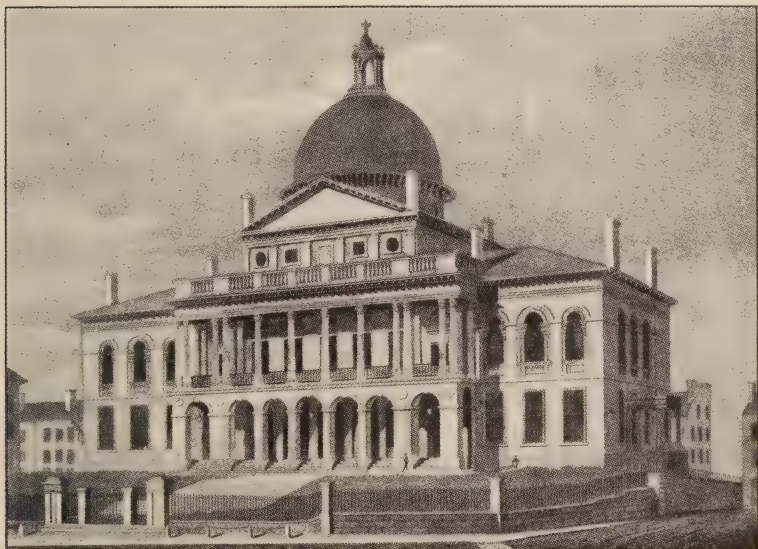
While engaged in political life, I took a view deeper than mere politics have ever reached. I saw, that by the accession of the new states to the union, and by the swift reduplication of their inhabitants, Massachusetts was rapidly losing her relative rank and power in the republic. . . .

Mann saw Massachusetts with brilliant resources of intellect and inventive power, and he felt sure that if it developed its industrial power it would retain its ascendancy: "She would remain the Star of the East, before which the wise men—the Magi—of other states would come and render homage." This motive explains much of Mann's legislative interests and activities.

His first speech in the house of representatives was in

<sup>1</sup> *Reply to the Remarks of the Thirty-one Schoolmasters*, pages 9, 10. Boston, 1844.

defense of religious liberty. In that state for many years the Legislature and the Supreme Court by its decisions tended to place all religious beliefs on a basis of full equality before the law. It was now proposed to create a close corporation limiting the income of certain property forever to the support of one creed. In this way the money and property of a deceased person might bind the religious thought of succeed-



*From a Contemporary Print*

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON

ing generations for centuries to come. Horace Mann, well-versed in European ecclesiastical history, foresaw that men's minds would be bound by such legislation. Although he was one of the youngest members of the house, serving his first term, he earnestly espoused the cause of religious freedom and showed that it was folly and injustice to set aside lands or property and determine by law for all future time what

creedal beliefs should be upheld. He deemed it the essence of bigotry to petrify religious opinions and so to arrest and stultify religious progress. When a vote was taken, the bill was killed never again to be revived in Massachusetts.

His second speech was in behalf of the railroads—one of the first on this subject ever printed in the United States. This was a period of internal improvement. Railroads were being projected to connect the seaboard with the rapidly growing West. A noted writer of the day says that next to the great questions of liberty and independence, there was no problem of greater importance to the people of Boston and the state of Massachusetts. In this speech Mann argued that the agricultural resources of the state were entirely inadequate to furnish sustenance to its population. Almost barren of mineral treasures, importing wool, cotton, and silk and most of its food, and already having a density of population of eighty to the square mile, the state of Massachusetts was already unable to feed and clothe its population. In Massachusetts, he argued, it was necessary to look to commerce and to the manufacturing and mechanic arts for material progress. He held that the enlargement of human power by the use of machinery was a prerequisite to the development of intellectual and moral attainments. He lauded the schoolhouses as “our republican line of fortification,” as the “impregnable fastness of liberty.” His argument concluded that a railroad would advance the interests of agriculture, commerce, manufacture, and the mechanical arts, and that it was essential to continued prosperity in all these branches of business. In his view on railroads he saw eye to eye with such statesmen as Governor Edward Everett and President John Quincy Adams.

Mann soon became prominent in the house. He served on a committee to report rules for the house. He took a leading



part in preparing and carrying through laws against lotteries. He was made chairman of the judiciary committee and reported "a bill for mitigating, in certain cases, the penalty for the crimes of arson, burglary, and larceny." He opposed a bill to reduce the representation in the lower house of the legislature. He protested against the practice of rushing bills through the house without proper consideration.

Especially he championed all matters which concerned morality, public charities, education, temperance, humanitarian institutions, and civil politics and religious liberty. He was the champion of the poor, the ignorant, and the unfortunate classes of society.

More than any other person, he advocated laws for improving the common schools. He was responsible for procuring enactment of the "fifteen gallon law," to aid the temperance movement. He had a missionary zeal for humanitarian reforms and was a crusading apostle for his beliefs. So much was this true that if a man stood for a cause in which he disbelieved, he tended to count him immediately as an enemy and turned upon him the full force of his scathing scorn and sarcasm. In the heat of legislative controversy and debate he violently denounced men who, just as sincere and earnest as he, differed in their judgment of the issues involved. He took no halfway measures. He was for or against, and it was difficult for him to understand those who did not agree with him.

There was no cause which was nearer the heart of Mann than the State Insane Hospital at Worcester, the first institution of its kind in the United States. In 1829 on behalf of a committee of the house of representatives, appointed to consider the subject, he reported orders providing for the appointment of a committee "to examine and ascertain the practicability and expediency of erecting, or procuring, at

the expense of the commonwealth, an asylum for the safe-keeping of lunatics, and persons furiously mad." A survey was made of the number of such persons in each town, and it was found that about half of them were confined, some in poorhouses and houses of industry, some in private homes, and still others in jails and houses of correction.

The plight of such individuals was shown. Housing conditions were frightful. In one case there was no bed, no chair, no bench. Two or three rough planks were strewed about the room. "A heap of filthy straw, like the nest of swine, was in the corner." In one jail was found a lunatic who had left his room but twice in eight years. The door of the apartment had not been opened for eighteen months, and the room was unwarmed by fire. In another the insane were scattered among thieves and murderers awaiting trial for their crimes. In another, two persons, a man and a woman, each about seventy years old, occupied the same cell. The woman was found lying under a broken window, the snow beating in on her body, clothed only with a few filthy and tattered rags. The man was in a similar situation. She had been there six years, he, twenty-one. Other inmates were kept in a cellar with no fire. The cells were about six by eight feet, made of plank, with only orifices four by six inches to admit air and light. One man had lived there seventeen years. These facts were interwoven into a brilliant address, illuminated with facts and figures, and enforced with illustrations.

The revolting conditions made a deep impression on his colleagues. The leading paper of the state stated: "We have not heard a speech during the session which seemed to occupy more of the individual attention of the house than Mr. Mann's." His impassioned plea brought the desired results. In March, 1830, the governor signed a *resolve* which

had formerly been passed by both houses authorizing a commission to erect a hospital, suitable to accommodate one hundred and twenty persons, at a cost not to exceed \$30,000. Mr. Mann was appointed chairman of the board of trustees, a post which he filled as long as the legislative decree allowed him to do so. The patients admitted at the beginning were brought almost entirely from jails and houses of correction.



*From a Contemporary Print*

STATE HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE, WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

Within the first year the number of applicants exceeded the facilities for taking care of them.

Inmates were allowed no liquor. Religious services were held. Dr. Samuel B. Woodward, an eminent authority on mental diseases, was appointed superintendent; he provided an excellent administration—so good, that Dr. Samuel G. Howe, passing through Worcester some dozen years later, turned to his wife and said: "There is Horace Mann's monument." The reports of improvement in the conduct of those

committed showed the importance of this pioneer work which antedates that of Dorothy Dix, his friend, who did so much in the same field.

When Mann moved to Boston early in 1833, he was a member of the lower house of the legislature. His law office was in the Brooks Building, just opposite the old State House. On the third floor were the offices of Edward G. Loring and Horace Mann, his partner, and of Luther S. Cushing. Others who occupied rooms in the same building were Charles Sumner, and his partner, G. S. Hilliard, Rufus Choate, John A. Andrew (later governor), Theophilus Parsons, Theophilus Chandler, and Peleg Chandler.<sup>2</sup> Immediately Mann entered the fellowship of the most prominent attorneys of the city.

He secured a room and took his meals at the home of the mother of James Freeman Clarke. The father having failed in business, she rented a house in Ashburton Place, Boston, and took boarders. Among them were Jared Sparks, former editor of the *North American Review*, and later to become professor of history and president of Harvard University; Mr. and Mrs. Devens; Edward S. Rand; and three sisters, Miss Elizabeth Peabody, Miss Mary Peabody (afterwards Mrs. Mann), and Miss Sophia Peabody (later Mrs. Nathaniel Hawthorne).<sup>3</sup> Here he remained until the next year (1834) when his only remaining brother failed in business. Mann became liable for his brother for many thousand dollars beyond the value of all he possessed. Not only was it necessary for him to advance five or six thousand dollars for his brother's debts; additional money was needed for living expenses. For this reason he was forced to leave Mrs.

<sup>2</sup> PIERCE, EDWARD L.—*Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner*, Vol. I, page 747. Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1877.

<sup>3</sup> CLARKE, JAMES FREEMAN—*Autobiography, Diary and Correspondence*. Published by Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.



Clarke's rooming house. He had a bed placed in his law office and for about three years took care of it with his own hands while he lived there; he restricted his expenses in every way possible. For almost six months, he says, he was unable to buy a dinner on half of the days. The strain told on his health. "Suffering from hunger and exhaustion, over-worked, without a single mortal to comfort and encourage me, I fell sick and so remained for about two months, my best friends not expecting my recovery, and some of them deprecating it as the infliction of further suffering." His office was his home during the remainder of his term as senator, and until several months after he had accepted the secretaryship of the Board of Education. November 29, 1837, his debts were finally paid, and he could again call his income his own. He then moved to take a room in a home on a near-by street.

But we must return to Mann's legislative career. In the autumn of 1833, soon after he had removed to Boston, Mann was elected as a senator, to represent Suffolk County. Social reforms still took possession of his humanitarian spirit. At Dedham he had been interested in the temperance movement. Now he became a member of the Council of the Massachusetts State Temperance Society and president of the Suffolk County Temperance Society. He was largely responsible for the Worcester State Convention held in 1834, which took measures to organize a young men's temperance society in every town and city in the state. He toured the state in person to urge teachers to oppose the liquor traffic and to support the temperance movement. As a member of the house, he had almost single-handedly waged a losing battle in behalf of temperance and sobriety. On this occasion his law partner wrote: "You are before the house and the public as the champion of sobriety and morality and public virtue,



and godfather to the statute." Five years later, as president of the senate, he signed a bill, passed by both houses by a large majority, prohibiting the sale of liquor on Sunday. Also in 1834 he allowed the Council of the Massachusetts Temperance Society to publish his small booklet, "*Remarks upon the Comparative Profit of Grocers and Retailers as Derived from Temperate and Intemperate Customers*," as the first of a series of tracts. He was warned that his course would bring political opposition, but continued in his course as a matter of principle. Despite the hostility of the rum sellers and distillers, he was re-elected to the senate.

An onerous duty falling upon Mann at this time was the revision of the statutes of Massachusetts. This was done under the supervision of Theron Metcalf, member of the legislature from Dedham, and Horace Mann. They examined proof sheets, compared them with the official copies of the laws in the office of the Secretary of State, prepared the marginal notes to the sections, made an index, and supplied references to the leading rulings of the supreme court of the state. These revised statutes, published in 1836, formed a volume of more than a thousand pages.

This was done in the midst of the active practice of law, in which Mann declared that the year brought more business than ever before. The court at Dedham continued to sit until the day just before the legislature convened. At the beginning of the session a new honor was thrust upon him. He wrote his sister:

The Senate didn't know any better than to put me in as President, which for the first two weeks threw a great deal of labor (and the worst kind of labor, too, for me, for it was *ceremonious* labor, which I heartily abominate) upon me; and in addition to all this I have had to work many hours each day upon the statutes, which we are publishing. But I have a perfect system

about it, so that I have gone thro' with it, with no worse consequence than fatigue.

But the office had its rewards, too. The new governor who had just taken office was Edward Everett, elected on the Whig ticket. A former professor at Harvard, he was much interested in education. Doubtless the close association which Mann had with Governor Everett in his two years as president of the senate had much to do with the opportunity which came to him later when he was appointed a member of the new-created Board of Education, and shortly thereafter, its secretary. They saw eye to eye on educational questions. Perhaps an outstanding example of this is to be found in the matter of the distribution of surplus funds from the Federal Government in 1837. When these funds were available to the states, they were used in various ways. In Massachusetts, when the problem arose, it was decided to allot them to the towns for use in the public service. Governor Everett suggested as one way of using them, the application of the amounts received to the use of the public schools, to be apportioned on the basis of local contributions. Appearing before a committee Mann made a plea for the distribution of the money to the towns as a bounty, provided they would themselves raise three dollars for each pupil. Otherwise he feared they would accept money from the state and abate their own taxes; such a misuse of the gift would make it a calamity. He at the same time made an impassioned argument for suitable recompense for teachers and for the worthy support of the schools, saying:

The business of the schoolmaster is more than a prophecy—it is, to a great extent, an actual predestination of what the rising generation shall be. The instructors of youth are the great fortune-tellers of the nations.

No cause appealed to him more strongly or convincingly than that of the common schools. He had come from a race of teachers. Both of his parents, his sisters, and a number of cousins and aunts had been teachers. He himself had taught both in the district schools and in college. As a statesman he saw education as the solvent of the difficulties which the state faced. Agitation for improvement of the schools was widespread. He was always found voting for the elevation of the schools. Before he left the senate an epoch-making law was passed, creating a state board of education; he became its secretary. But a review of the political, social, and educational situation will assist in understanding problems of the day, the opportunity presented in the schools, and the need for advanced thought and firm action in promoting the universal education of the people. After an interlude of two chapters we shall return to the narrative of Mann's life.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SURGE OF REFORM

THE period from 1820 to 1850 was a momentous era of reform in America. Society was in a "yeasty" condition. It produced a leaven of solid progress which ushered in changes that added greatly to the national life, but also much froth. Scheme piled upon scheme for the amelioration of the status of the various classes in society. There were a

thousand creeds and battle cries,  
a thousand warring social schemes,  
a thousand new moralities,  
and twenty thousand thousand dreams.

This welter of discussion produced "isms" of all kinds. It was the *Golden Age* for cranks, fanatics, and impractical idealists, who formed the inevitable "lunatic fringe" which in times of stress edges the substance of basic and fundamental movements. For good or ill the minds of men were on the march.

James Freeman Clarke writes to his wife, quoting Emerson, the Sage of Concord: "I find social life in a precious state of fermentation. New ideas are flying high and low. Every man carries a revolution in his waistcoat pocket."

Ralph Waldo Emerson, lecturing on the New England Farm, in 1840, scents a coming revolution:

Whoever has had opportunity of acquaintance with Society in New England during the last twenty-five years . . . will have

been struck with the great activity of thought and experimenting. . . . What a fertility of projects for the salvation of the world! One apostle thought all men should go to farming; and another that no man should buy or sell: that the use of money was the cardinal evil; another, that the mischief was in our diet. . . .

The same author writing an editorial for the first number of the *Dial*, journal of the transcendental movement at Brook Farm, in 1840, scents a coming revolution:

No one can converse much with different classes of society in New England, without remarking the progress of a revolution. Those who share it have no external organization, no badge, no creed, no name. They do not vote, or print, or meet together. They do not know each other's faces or names. They are united only in a common love of truth, and love of its work. They are of all conditions and constitutions. Of these acolytes, if some are happily born and well bred, many are no doubt ill dressed, ill placed, ill made—with as many scars of hereditary vice as other men. Without pomp, without trumpet, in lonely and obscure places, in solitude, in servitude, in compunctions, and privations, trudging beside the team in dusty road, or drudging a hireling in other men's cornfields, schoolmasters, who teach a few children rudiments for a mere pittance, ministers of small parishes of the obscurer sects, lone women in dependent condition, matrons and young maidens, rich and poor, beautiful and ill-favored, without concert or proclamation of any kind, they have silently given in their several adherence to a new hope, and in all companies do signify a greater trust in the nature and resources of men, than the laws or the popular opinions will well allow.

This spirit of the time is felt by every individual with some difference, to each casting its light upon the objects nearest to his temper and habits of thought;—to one, coming in the shape of special reforms in the state; to another, in modifications of the various callings of men, and customs of business; to a third, opening a new scope for literature and art; to a fourth, in philosophical insight; to a fifth, in the vast solitudes of prayer. It is in



every form a protest against usage, and a search for principles. In all its movements it is peaceable, and in the very lowest marked with a triumphant success. Of course, it rouses the opposition of all which it judges and condemns, but it is too confident in its tone to comprehend an objection, and so builds no outworks for possible defense against contingent enemies. It has the step of Fate, and goes on existing like an oak or a river, because it must. . . .

He continues:

With this din of opinion and debate there was a keener scrutiny of institutions and domestic life than any we had ever known, and there were changes of employment, dictated by consciences. . . . A restless, prying, conscientious criticism broke out in unexpected quarters. Who gave me the money with which I bought my coat? Why should the professional labor and that of the counting house be paid disproportionately to the labor of the porter and the wood-sawyer? Is there not a wide disparity between the lot of me and the lot of thee, my poor brother, my poor sister?

Truly the "new wine of idealism" was filling the minds of many who, intoxicated by the new ideas, thought that they must be at once effective in society, if they were not to withdraw from it. Adolescent as it was, and with the vagaries of youth, America was in a state of unco-ordinated activity. Frequent changes in fortune and fluctuations in wealth came with a rush. De Tocqueville, a keen foreign observer of the period, comments: "The whole life of an American is passed like a game of chance, a revolutionary crisis, or a battle."

Perhaps no one can interpret the period better than Emerson, quoted above. No less an authority than James Russell Lowell,<sup>1</sup> writing on the spirit which dominated the time, analyzes it by saying:

<sup>1</sup> LOWELL, JAMES RUSSELL—*Literary Essays*, Vol. I, page 365. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1899. Used by permission.

The Puritanism of the past found its unwilling poet in Hawthorne, the rarest creative imagination of the century, the rarest in some respects since Shakespeare; but the Puritanism that cannot die, the Puritanism that made New England what it is, and is destined to make America what it should be, found its voice in Emerson. Though holding himself aloof from all active partnership in movements of reform, he has been the sleeping partner who has supplied a great deal of their capital.

In like fashion, John Morley, estimating the underlying spirit of the times, notes:

It was a day of ideals in every camp. The general restlessness was intense among reflecting conservatives as among reflecting liberals. . . . A great wave of humanity, a great wave of social sentiment, poured itself among all who had the faculty for large and disinterested thinking.<sup>2</sup>

Vast economic and social changes were appearing in America. The machine age had arrived. Due to the rapid growth of factories and the demand for manufactured goods, cities were expanding at a brisk pace. Cotton was soon to be king in New England as in the South. The large industrial centers were beginning to appear.

As late as 1820, there were only thirteen cities of eight thousand population in the twenty-three states of the Union, whereas in 1840 there were forty-four such cities. During the same period the percentage of the population living in the cities increased from four and nine-tenths to eight and five-tenths. In 1820 Boston had a population of forty-three thousand two hundred ninety-eight; in 1840, ninety-three thousand three hundred eighty-three, more than double the number. The cotton industry was developing in New England by leaps and bounds; the Lowells and the Lawrences pros-

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Richard Cobden*, page 61. Boston, 1881.

pered in the manufacture of textiles and were able to make large benefactions.

The tide of immigration had begun to swell with the prosperity which accompanied the high tariff policy of the decades following the War of 1812. The number of foreign-born increased from forty thousand in 1830 to two million five hundred thousand in 1850. The mills, in the earlier days, drew their labor supply from the farms and smaller villages of New England. With the employment of the cheap labor which was made possible by the onset of immigration, the native workers were crowded out. The Irish, in particular, were a group of unskilled "pick-and-shovel" workers who had no choice but were forced to accept at low pay such jobs as were offered them by the corporations. The men were first employed on "railroad gangs," the girls as "housemaids." They later competed for the mill and factory positions. They were poor, generally embraced the Catholic faith, and allied themselves with the Democratic Party. The relatively satisfactory laboring conditions, which had formerly existed in the mill towns as described by Charles Dickens and Harriet Martineau in their travels in this country, became exceedingly bad. Barely able to keep body and soul together to support themselves and their large families, many workers became public charges. In 1833 it was estimated that one eighth of the total population of New York City was made up of paupers or criminals. Children roved the streets, and there was one saloon for every eighty persons in the total population. It was the practice of certain districts of England, Ireland, and Scotland to induce paupers to come to the United States by furnishing free transportation. In 1828 it was estimated that at least seventy-five thousand persons were incarcerated in debtors' prisons in this country, more than one half of them for debts

of less than twenty dollars. At this time three thousand were imprisoned annually for debts in Massachusetts. In proportion to the population, Boston had more than any other part of the country. In 1830, thirteen hundred men and one hundred women were imprisoned because of nonpayment of debts. Many of these had been brought in by fraud; they created a serious problem in all the seaboard towns where they lived. Intense feeling arose. Anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic riots occurred in New York and other states. In Boston a convent was burned by a mob of four thousand; at another time the militia had to be called out to protect the Irish Catholics against the Protestant terrorists who attacked them.

Forced by the competition of the seaboard and lured by cheap land and adventure, a ceaseless stream of migrants moved westward by river, by road, by railroad into the rich lands of Ohio and the Northwest Territory. The names of towns and cities, the architecture, the speech of the inhabitants, the local customs mark very clearly the path of the flood of pioneers who moved toward the West and its new opportunity. In the early stages land, purchased from the government, was plentiful and cheap. But as speculators gained control, prices rose rapidly.

The East needed the grain raised so easily and so abundantly on the western plains. Hence developed a great concern for internal improvements. New England foresaw that she must bestir herself to compete with the National Road from Washington to the West and with the railroads which were being projected. The Erie Canal had been constructed, and it was necessary to find a connecting route. The interest in a railroad from Boston to Albany became a major issue of the day. Leaders in industry and in the state were awake to the opportunity. Massachusetts found her future bound

up with an inlet for farm produce and an outlet for manufactured goods. In 1830 there was scarcely a mile of railroads in the country. Twenty years later there were 9,000 miles of track.

Essentially, these decades were a period of struggle between the aristocracy and the masses.

Alexis de Tocqueville, writing in *Democracy in America* (1836), saw that the fundamental struggle was concerned with differences between opposing classes which have always been found in free communities in that "the object of one is to limit, and that of the other to extend, the authority of the people." It was a single combat in which the common man opposed the privileged classes and demanded a larger share of the goods and the consequent opportunity to live a richer life. He wished for, and struggled to secure, greater voting power, higher wages, shorter working hours, political and social recognition, and better educational opportunities. This movement in America was a phase and a reduplication of the general trend towards democracy going on for centuries in the western nations and intensified and dramatized by the French Revolution. The "rights of man" imported into America during the Revolution were political rather than social and economic rights.

The rising tide of democracy expressed itself differently in the East and in the West. To its banner in the West were drawn those of meager resources. The section had been settled by those possessing few worldly goods. Here there was little distinction in property. There was little variation among the inhabitants in economic conditions, in interests, or in problems. Neighborliness was fostered, even forced, by similarity in mode of life and in economic status. The settlers in the newer states were renters, hired men, speculators, small farmers, and small traders. Social equality was



taken for granted. Life was rural; since the inhabitants were of one economic level, the West's democracy made each man feel he was the peer of any other.

The Westerners had a growing sense of power which was augmented in 1829 by the selection of Andrew Jackson, a true Westerner, for the presidency. The political scene was now dominated by the rough and ready democracy of the West which displaced the cultured aristocracy of the eastern seaboard. The Adamses, Madison, Monroe, and Jefferson—all from the higher classes—had had their day. The election of Jackson was a victory for the masses; the national political power passed into western hands. In the local political units the same trend was evident. The plain people were coming into their own and were to have their day.

In the East itself there had been a great change in sentiment. There was a sharp division of society into the autocracy of wealth and birth, on the one hand, and the democracy of poor immigrants and mill hands joining with the farmers, on the other. Earlier the wellborn had been dominant. The English notion, that only the socially acceptable and the rich were capable of voting and holding office, was imported with the early colonists. In 1789 only four of the thirteen states gave voting rights to nonholders of real estate, and less than twenty per cent of the white male population had suffrage rights. This was in evident contrast to the situation in the Western States which had come into the Union with full franchise for the adult male population. While by 1821 fifteen of the twenty-one states and territories had adopted almost universal white male suffrage, New England still lagged in this respect. Massachusetts had reformed her constitution in 1820, when such statesmen as John Quincy Adams and Daniel Webster were members of the convention. Property qualifications for voting, long un-

popular, were repealed. Now any male citizen who paid a poll tax, unless he was a pauper or under guardianship, could vote. But the Congregational Church still continued in a favored position, and by constitutional provision Catholics were debarred from benefits of taxes for their church. In Rhode Island it was only with Dorr's rebellion (1842) that the voting rights were extended to the more than fifty per cent of the men formerly disfranchised.

Though the same great fundamental surge of democracy was rising in New England as in the West, it came from different causes. It was a struggle of class against class. Great industrial and financial development had followed the War of 1812. Earlier in the century all phases of life—society, business, religion, politics, culture—had been dominated by the conservative aristocrats. A tidal wave of liberalism and democracy had now moved to its crest and those lower in the economic and social scale were demanding a "place in the sun." The contest came to full fruition in the years 1830-1855. "People's Movements" of all types prospered. There was an earnest insistence that men had rights, not as members of a special favored class, but merely as men. Human rights and human brotherhood were the keynotes of thinking and acting. Democracy came to mean in men's minds, not merely an equality of political conditions, but a society in which human nature had the right to express itself. The Puritan conservative was attacked by antimasons, abolitionists, locofocos, free-debtors, and the workingmen's parties.

Labor was annoyed by the competition of cheap labor which was filling the seaboard towns. At first the labor forces were weak. In 1820 there were 56,296 persons in the United States engaged in manufacturing; in 1840 there were 455,668. Three fourths of these were in New England states.

Already in 1840 the value of the products of Massachusetts factories surpassed that of all the Western States grouped together. The manufactured products of New England exceeded those of agriculture by ten per cent. For three decades prior to the Civil War, there was a period of rapid economic expansion. In a single decade, (1805-1815) the number of spindles in the cotton mills had increased thirty-fold from 4,500 to 130,000. In this country as well as in England and on the Continent, the Industrial Revolution was in full swing. In 1820, for every fifty-one persons engaged in manufacturing, fifteen were in commerce, one hundred and seventy-two in farming. A decade later agriculture still led, with shipping second. But during the following decades the workmen were drained off to the cities. The newly established factories employed not only men, but women and children. Farms were abandoned for opportunities, independence, and more lucrative wages in cities.

The laboring men soon formed a relatively compact body. The "workingmen's movement" was an organization of the liberals in opposition to the conservative order. It was a protest against the control by the "accumulators" of Boston. Its members were the radical wing of the Jacksonian democracy. It was composed of farm hands in the West, and skilled laborers in the East. Only a few Irish immigrants joined. In 1827 the workingmen of the city of Philadelphia came together in a single movement. Becoming very active in 1828, they formed labor parties in not less than fifteen states, and established fifty labor papers. Their aims were to secure a ten-hour day; to restrict child labor; to abolish the contract system of convict labor; to abolish imprisonment for debt; to exempt wages and tools from seizure for debt; and to abolish sweat shops. By 1836 the union membership in the seaboard cities exceeded 300,000. Philadelphia

led with the organization of fifty-three unions, though New York was a close second with fifty-two. Baltimore had twenty-three unions, while Newark and Boston each had thirteen. Strikes were common. In 1831 a large convention made up of farmers and workmen was held in Boston. They advocated abolishing all monopolies, like banks and other corporations holding charters. Leaders such as William Ellery Channing, Robert Rantoul, Jr., Horace Mann, and James G. Carter urged their cause. Education was advanced as the surest and best method of advancing their aspirations. Channing's lecture on self-culture bore this theme. Systematic attempts were made by the capitalists to crush them and to break up the movement. The following year a counter meeting was called by merchants and shipmasters to advance their own interests and to oppose labor's demands. As a result when the Panic of 1837 broke, the trade unions almost completely disappeared.

Labor leaders were enthusiastic about education in tax-supported schools. They saw here the one hope of the workmen in improving their lot, and education soon took first place among the reforms they demanded. They urged the necessity of an "equal, universal, republican system of education." This was in 1834. The next year they demanded the establishment of free libraries "for the use and benefit of mechanics and workingmen." At that time there were more than a million child illiterates in the United States. Even in 1840 not more than half of the children of New England received free education in common schools. In the Middle States only one seventh and in the West, one sixth had these opportunities. Though the size of the electorate had increased more rapidly than the population, illiteracy had also increased by as much as fifty per cent.

Workingmen aimed not only at higher wages and shorter

hours, but at all sorts of reforms—in education, temperance, abolition, land tenure, and better treatment of women. They were trying to secure social recognition for their members. They joined the Antimason Party because they believed that Freemasonry was “a conspiracy of the few against the equal rights of the many.” The Workingmen’s Party drew its strength from two classes—urban mechanics and the agricultural proletariat. The former, composed of carpenters, masons, ship caulkers, and workers of all classes, were interested in a ten-hour day, universal education, and other reforms. The latter, who were the main support of the party, were eking out a precarious existence from the soil. The struggle was between country and city and producer and consumer. Farmers then were still in the ascendancy, although the drift had set in towards the city. It has already been noted how overwhelmingly the occupation of agriculture dominated in 1820. This condition was rapidly changing. The rural residents were opposed to the citizens of the towns who controlled the finances, the shipping, railroads, and manufacturing. The poor rural democrat was pitted against the city aristocrat or plutocrat; urban labor and urban capital had joined issue.

Not only were there great differences in economic status between the classes in society but the differences were constantly increasing. Distribution of wealth was becoming more and more unequal. The rich were becoming richer, and the poor, largely on account of the competition of cheap immigrant labor, were becoming poorer. The smug, complacent, and cultured conservatives were now assailed by a rising storm and protest of individualism, which demanded improved opportunities for the masses. Craftsmanship was disappearing. The notion of a permanent wage-earning class began to find favor. For these workingmen chances to change



their condition had disappeared. The masses had made a definite break with the classes and were adopting new ideas and trying new paths to happiness. Under rapidly changing conditions experimentation with the new was the watchword of the day.

To the highly emotionalized and confused tendencies of the day were added the disturbing influence of a major panic. The speculation encouraged by the rapid increase of production in the factories, the securing of luxuries, and the speculation in western lands produced such a "boom" as had never been experienced in America. Along with the boom went a great amount of corruption. Henry Clay said, in 1840, that out of sixty-seven officials of the land offices, sixty-four were defaulters. Gambling and feverish speculation ran riot. Printing presses doubled the amount of paper money in the seven years between 1830 and 1837. Western lands doubled in price. In the short space of five years the assessed value of New York City real estate increased sixty per cent. In two years following 1834 the sales of government lands to settlers and speculators multiplied five fold to a total of \$25,000,000. Money mad, both banker and borrower indulged in the most fantastic and absurd hopes. The National Government, finding surpluses piling up in the treasury during the period of boom and inflated values, decided to distribute unneeded funds amounting to \$37,000,000 to the states. Hardly was the money doled out before the panic broke. The long era of prosperity and luxurious living, the issue of paper currency, and the mania of wildcat banking were a combination bound to bring a reaction. In May the storm broke, first in the cities. Values faded away. In North Carolina farms declined to two per cent of their peak values. In Alabama almost all the property of the state changed hands, while in the United States in general half of the

property was sold. Slaves could be purchased for a sixth of their former value in Mississippi. Land which had been sold for from twenty-five to thirty dollars an acre could be bought for from three to five dollars, while cheaper lands formerly valued at ten to twenty dollars an acre were bid in at sheriffs' sales for fifty cents.

All but three New York City banks suspended specie payment. A third of Ohio's banks had failed. A violent reaction against bankers was increased by almost daily news of their dishonesty. New York City, which only a few years previously had suffered from a great fire, was like a city of the dead. Shipping was idle. The value of merchandise fell thirty per cent almost immediately. Merchandise became a drug on the market and building of all kinds was discontinued. By 1841 there had been thirty-three thousand business failures with a total loss of \$440,000,000. This, the first of Wall Street's panics, laid a heavy hand upon all. The huge fortunes of the rich quickly evaporated, but the brunt of the depression was visited upon the poor, who lost even the meager livelihood they formerly had. In a short period of five months nine tenths of all the factories of the Eastern States were idle. More than fifty thousand employees were thrown out of work in the shoe factories of Massachusetts. With the cessation of building six thousand employees were discharged in New York. Southern planters threw their slaves on the market and accepted any bid which would make it possible for them to buy food for the others. Farmers and land owners were submerged under a mountain of debts from which it was impossible for them to extricate themselves and many foreclosures resulted. With the hard conditions in the East, a new urge was given to western migration. It was in the darkest hour of the panic that the Board of

Education of Massachusetts was organized and began its work.

During the period under consideration, radical views current in Europe were imported and absorbed in America. In turn American radicalism had a reflex effect in Europe. Thousands of immigrants in the United States were writing home to friends and relatives. Religious groups still maintained connection with the parent countries. Reformers like Robert Owen were moving back and forth. The penny newspaper had just begun to circulate. New England, in particular, was a shipping section; the sailors came in touch with new ideas in foreign ports. Boston and Cambridge had inherited the tradition of Cambridge University. A considerable number of students was to be found in foreign universities. Finally, English publications were widely sold and read in America.

The intellectual atmosphere was decidedly affected by these contacts. From Germany disciples of Goethe, Schiller, and from England Carlyle were bringing in the philosophy of transcendentalism. Modified, it became a typically American movement. Transcendentalism has been defined as "the flowering of the Puritan spirit." More recently it has been called "an intellectual overtone to democracy, a belief in the divinity of human nature."<sup>3</sup> Kant's philosophy was called the *transcendental philosophy*. The fundamental tenets of this philosophy placed great stress on idealism and reform. In it was incorporated the notion of the perfectibility of man, a doctrine thoroughly believed by the French revolutionists. Instinct was seen as a better guide for conduct than science. It was a doctrine of freedom which asserted the

<sup>3</sup> MORISON, S. E. and COMMAGER, H. S.—*The Growth of the American Republic*, page 399. Oxford University Press, New York, 1930. Used by permission.

validity of the emotions as a guide for behavior. In contrast with the Calvinist faith, so common in those days, this group urged the inherent goodness of Nature and of God. They aimed at a Spiritual Declaration of Independence, an Emancipation Proclamation of the Soul. By the nature of his creed the transcendentalist was a reformer. With a conviction of the righteousness of their cause and with sublime intensity of purpose, the spirit by which these reformers were animated was that of William Lloyd Garrison as expressed in the first number of the *Liberator* published on New Year's Day, 1831:

I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—AND I WILL BE HEARD.

From that philosophy sprang the movement for women's rights. The transcendentalist, too, glorified the Negro. He believed in the latent capacity of every boy and girl and was convinced of the infinite worth of man as man. He glorified mind. He believed that the truth of religion was not dependent on tradition or history but upon the faculty to perceive spiritual truth. Intuitively a firm believer in the possibilities for progress inherent in the human race, he kindled great hope and enthusiasm for the regeneration and advancement of the human family. Dr. William Ellery Channing, a leader in the movement, had been preaching its doctrines in Boston. The "divinity of man" was his theme song. To release the powers of mankind, emancipated thought was necessary. "Its philosophers were apostles of freedom, its poets sang the joy of living, not the bitterness of sin and death."<sup>4</sup> The transcendental club boasted a membership which included a group of leaders of thought in

<sup>4</sup> HOWE, JULIA WARD—*Reminiscences*, page 147. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1899. Used by permission.

Boston and vicinity. There were Ralph Waldo Emerson, the leading interpreter of the transcendental philosophy in America; Amos Bronson Alcott, devotee and expounder of Pestalozzi's doctrines; James Freeman Clarke, liberal young Unitarian minister; Theodore Parker, one of the most talented of Boston's talented ministers; H. D. Thoreau, naturalist who lauded the simple life of nature; Nathaniel Hawthorne, the moody brooding philosopher of Puritanism; Elizabeth Peabody, enthusiastic newcomer to the city, alert to its stirring intellectual life; William Ellery Channing, the great leader of Unitarianism; and there were Reverend George Ripley and others. Intellectual and spiritual leadership of the group centered in Emerson.

The religious accompaniment of the transcendental movement was Unitarianism. The Orthodox and Congregationalist churches held that human nature was depraved, that some must be eternally lost and "dammed for the glory of God." Man, in their opinion, had been created with a bias to sin. The liberals denied the doctrine of the trinity and the divinity of Jesus. They rejected the doctrine of total depravity and believed in the inherent dignity and worth of man. From the earliest days the orthodox church had dominated life. Only church members could vote, even though they were a minority of the population. There were sharply drawn social lines. Special seats, with pew rents, were reserved for the well-born and genteel. Students in college were listed in the catalogue in the order of the social rank of their fathers. Puritan clergymen were a favored class, and exerted a powerful influence on thought of the day.

In this period life was being secularized more and more, although this tendency was being vigorously opposed by the orthodox. Established churches were disestablished. After 1830 religious periodicals and sermons were replaced to a



great degree by secular and nonpolitical magazines. In Massachusetts the Congregational church had been the bulwark of Federalism. The young Methodists, Baptists, and Universalists, together with the Unitarians, demanded religious freedom. In 1833 the provision of the constitution which required attendance at church was repealed. The sects were given legal equality, the state and church were absolutely divorced, and the legal status of the "established church" was changed. An amendment provided that "all religious sects and denominations, demeaning themselves peaceably and as good citizens of the Commonwealth, shall be equally under the protection of the law; and no subordination of any one sect or denomination to another shall ever be established by law."

The American Unitarian Association, formed in 1825, had grown until in 1840 there were one hundred thirty-five Unitarian churches as against four hundred and nine Orthodox and Congregational churches. Town meetings had the right to select ministers. Unitarians secured control of many Congregational churches. The legality of town choice had been upheld by the state supreme court of Massachusetts. All the leading churches of Boston except Old South Church went Unitarian; it is said that one hundred of the one hundred twenty Unitarian churches in Massachusetts in 1843 were formerly Congregational.

The leading literary men of Massachusetts were Unitarian. The trustees and professors of Harvard College were likewise of this faith. The élite, the moneyed class, took leadership in Unitarian churches. The judges on the bench, the prominent attorneys, the leading public men of Boston swarmed to the support of the new belief.<sup>5</sup> James

<sup>5</sup> BEECHER, CHARLES (Editor)—*Autobiography, Correspondence, etc., of Lyman Beecher, D. D.*, Vol. II, page 110. New York, 1866.

Russell Lowell had said: "Protestantism had made its fortune and no longer protested." The Unitarian leadership did protest not only in religion but against social cancers and injustices. In fact, it was a religion of protest.

Social schemes for the amelioration of society sprang up like mushrooms. Reform was the watchword of the day. It was the style. Each had his own specialty, but all were also interested in the others. More than two hundred communists' Utopias were established. Finding society dismal and unidealistic, like monks and nuns the adherents deserted it for communities based on a supposed perfect plan. Most were short-lived but for two or three decades they centered the attention of the country on socialistic and communistic schemes for human betterment. One of the most famous of the communities was established at New Harmony, Indiana, by Robert Owen, the Scotch reformer. In his opening address at New Harmony in 1825, he had stated, "I am come to this country to introduce an entire new order of society; to change it from the ignorant selfish system, to an enlightened social system, which shall gradually unite all interests into one and remove all cause for contest between individuals." Owen brought William McClure, "father of American geology," to organize his school. He first introduced the Pestalozzian system into the United States. Owen himself had visited Hofwyl and had sent his sons there later for their education. He believed in the equal education of men and women. In the New Harmony community absolute equality among men was insisted upon. Later the Pestalozzian movement spread to other sections, and among its enthusiastic champions were Horace Mann, George Boutwell, Lowell Mason, Louis Agassiz, David P. Page, and E. A. Sheldon. New Harmony became the rendezvous of scholarly and progressive people from all over the United States and northern

Europe. Very soon another society based on Owen's principles was begun at Yellow Springs, Ohio, where Antioch College was to be founded. Other communities were organized in New York, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Fourierism, another scheme for improving the social order, declared that there are fixed moral and intellectual laws according to which man must live. Its adherents had certain socialistic notions regarding the distribution of the wealth of the community. Horace Greeley, the famous New York editor, put the doctrine of community ownership of property to a test in Pike County, Pennsylvania.

The most famous community of all was the Brook Farm. Here were assembled "kindred spirits" who believed in "plain living and high thinking." The adults labored for the common good and a school was provided for children. From beginning to end, more than two hundred persons were connected with it, a large number of them young unmarried people. It counted among its distinguished guests and visitors such prominent persons as Emerson, Channing, Alcott, Horace Greeley, W. W. Story, Elizabeth Peabody, and Robert Owen. George Ripley and Margaret Fuller were leading spirits. For a time, until disillusioned, Hawthorne was a member.

In politics, as in philosophy and religion, changes of moment were occurring. During James Monroe's administration, an "era of good feeling" prevailed and party lines were not closely drawn. By the time that John Quincy Adams took office, a more distinct cleavage had come to be. The Federalist Party gasped its last breath in 1824. By the late thirties two major parties attracted the support of the great mass of voters, the Whig and Democratic. By 1846 the former party had split into two divisions, the "Conscience" Whigs, which were soon to form the Free-Soil Party under

the leadership of such progressives as Charles Sumner, Richard Dana, and John G. Palfrey, the historian; and the "Cotton" Whigs of the South.

The Whig Party in Massachusetts and the North counted, as its adherents, conservatives, financiers, manufacturers, merchants, ship owners, the wealthy, as well as many shopkeepers and native laborers. The greater number of prominent intellectual leaders also enlisted under this standard. As a rule the Unitarians were Whigs, as were the Transcendentalists. The party was strongest in urban districts. It held the preponderance of power in Massachusetts till 1850, when a coalition of Democrats and Free-Soilers was victorious and Charles Sumner was elected to the United States Senate.

The Democratic Party, the party of protest, capitalized the discontent against the Whigs. Its recruits came in great number from the poorer and humbler members of society. Its strength was in the rural areas. The farmers, farm hands, and other rural residents were ready converts to its cause. It was strong among the smaller merchants and bankers, the seamen, the city working classes, and the Irish immigrants and was influential in the Congregationalist, Baptist, Methodist, and Quaker churches. The orthodox churches found that their views had much in common with the principles of the Democratic Party. Included in the Democratic Party as a radical wing were the Locofocos, an outgrowth of the Workingmen's Party of 1829. Emerson once remarked: "The Democrats had the best plans, the Whigs the best men." In 1840 a senator observed that the election of that year was a "contest between radicalism and the property and education of the country."

Reform was in the air. Each brand of prophet and each fanatic had his followers. Idealistic cranks had come upon

halcyon days. Swept along by the enthusiasms of the day, the credulous found nothing impossible of accomplishment. No theory was too wild to gain rousing endorsement. The Millerites convinced those of a mentally low scale, the gullible, that the end was at hand, and ascension robes were ordered. Some went mad. This point of view spread like wildfire over Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Maine, and Ohio. Dr. Edward Eggleston states in *The End of the World* that all denominations were tintured by the belief.

Others, more realistic and mundane, planned for a better life on earth. Phrenologists were examining skulls and facial features to estimate ability and character. Land reformers and "women's rights" advocates were noisily proclaiming their creeds. "Bloomers" were a concrete announcement to the world that tradition in dress had been discarded along with old ideas. Not a reform but had its Elijahs and devotees, even though in the interest of a "lost cause."

Reformers were not pleasant people, but they found the sore spots in society and they purged the social system. A needed catharsis was administered to the body politic.

Three basic elements were responsible for the reform movements. The Quakers and Puritans, with other protesting groups, were by philosophy and practice, bent on remolding the world in accordance with the pattern of their thought and belief. They were ardent advocates of any cause which they espoused. There was an interaction between groups in Europe and America. There was an interchange of lectures on women's rights, on slavery, on missionary methods, and on social reforms. The French slogans of *Egalité* and *Fraternité* had intrenched themselves in the thinking of western Europeans who transferred them to America. The New England Renaissance drove ahead, making converts wherever it went. With Puritanic zeal the missionaries of the new gospel



of human rights labored to spread their gospel to men everywhere.

Among other fundamental reforms were those relating to slavery and to temperance. The former early came within the ken of the reformers. An age dominated by liberalism and devoted to the reduction of social ills could not long tolerate the injustices of a social tradition which made one group of men servile servants of another. There had long been a conviction of the wrong in the slavery system. William Lloyd Garrison came to Boston, fanned the feeble flame of opposition into fever heat, and attacked the whole system with devastating argument and pungent searing words. The soil was fertile for the germination of the antislavery seed. Antislavery societies sprang up, the *Liberator* (first issued on New Year's Day, 1831) and other papers propagandized for freedom, and a primary reform was soon in the making. Major political parties were torn asunder in conflict and new parties arose having a single goal, the emancipation of the blacks. Boston became the admitted center of antislavery sentiment. The New England Antislavery Society was formed in 1832. Among the abolitionists were Samuel J. May, afterwards principal of the normal school at West Newton, Wendell Phillips, John G. Whittier, Edmund Quincy, and Lydia Maria Child. These dramatically and strongly opposed such early church leaders as Wilbur Fisk, leader of the New England Methodists, President Wayland of Brown, President Lord of Dartmouth and other pro-slavery advocates.

The poverty of the lower classes was accentuated by the use of alcoholic stimulants. By far the greater number of women drank, and drinking was an almost universal practice among the men. Opposition to the growing evil of intemperance arose among the New England evangelical churches.

Lyman Beecher preached his famous "six sermons" against the use of liquors; the American Temperance Society, organized in Boston in 1826, advocated total abstinence. Leaders were found in the orthodox colleges—President Humphreys of Amherst; Hopkins, of Williams; Appleton, of Bowdoin; Lord, of Dartmouth; Day, of Yale; Wayland, of Brown. The Democratic Party backed the movement. New England led in the reform, there being a third of the societies and of the membership east of the Hudson in 1831. Soon New York had seven hundred societies. By 1833 there were 4,000 societies enrolling 500,000 members. A year later, there were 5,000 societies with a total membership of 1,000,000, when a national convention held in Philadelphia registered some 400 delegates from twenty-one states. Out of the meeting grew the United States Temperance Movement, known after 1836 as the American Temperance Union. In 1836 there were no less than eleven journals established for the sole purpose of propagating interest in the reform. The eighteenth-century doctrine of the perfectibility of man permeated the thinking in this reform as in others.

A chapter on the spirit of the times would be incomplete were it to omit reference to the literary rise of New England. This was the age of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, James Russell Lowell, Nathaniel Hawthorne, George Bancroft, George Ticknor, William H. Prescott, Francis Parkman, John Greenleaf Whittier, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Of these, Bancroft, Prescott, Parkman, Ticknor, and Longfellow were allied rather closely with the aristocratic group. The others were more affected by the liberal spirit of the day. Holmes, relative of Wendell Phillips, in his "One Hoss Shay" depicted the decline of New England Puritanism; Whittier, in his *Legends of New England* and his poems of slavery, breathed the spirit of reform; and

James Russell Lowell, in his *Bigelow Papers* satirized the Mexican War, to which he was so strongly opposed. Longfellow in his "Psalm of Life" breathed a new air of confidence into the spirits of men who were depressed with a philosophy of futility. With the exception of slavery, the Unitarians were little concerned with the social reforms of the day. As a rule the literary lights of Boston and the surrounding area were Whigs, though a Democratic paper cited the following members of that party in 1839: Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, William C. Bryant, Nathaniel Willis, George Bancroft, Alexander Everett, and Nathaniel Greene. The *Boston Atlas* retorted: "As a rule, your poets, your storytellers, your historians, your wits, nay, even your philosophers have been great worshippers of *power*, in whatever hands for the time being it might happen to be deposited."

Both as a citizen and as a legislator, as has been already seen, Horace Mann took a liberal position towards the problems of the day. His religious sympathies were with the Unitarians. Soon after his entrance into political life, he associated himself with the Whigs. He was interested in temperance, the antislavery movement, and popular education. Although he cannot be classed among their number, there were many elements of the doctrines of the transcendentalists which had an appeal for him. As a member of the legislature, he favored religious liberty, freedom of speech, and the amelioration of the condition of the unfortunate. As a friend of internal improvements, he urged the building of railroads. He was a keen analyst of the stirring problems confronting the country and was an active participant in solving them. Neither unduly conservative nor intensely radical, he aligned himself with the constructive forces which make for fundamental sturdy progress.

## CHAPTER VI

### EDUCATION—THE GREAT CAUSE

**A**MONG all the reforms of the time, none was more significant, or compelled more attention, than the cause of the common schools.

The early New England Puritans, many of them graduates of Cambridge and Oxford universities, were thoroughly interested in education, placing the schoolmaster's vocation second only to that of the ministry. The schoolhouse was erected beside the church. In 1635 Boston established its Latin School, and a year later Harvard College was founded to give higher education in the colony. In 1642 a compulsory education law was placed on the statute books. Parents were required to furnish the selectmen of the town data for a census, and were to be fined for refusing to give the information or for neglecting to send their children to school. But it did not provide for either schools or teachers; so, of course, the law was unenforceable. Instruction still had to be given at home, in voluntary schools, or by private teachers. The situation was, however, met by another law, the first general school law recorded in American history.

The new law, enacted November 11, 1647, read as follows:

It being one chief object of that old deluder, Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures, as in former times by keeping them in an unknown tongue, so in these latter times by persuading from the use of tongues, that so at least the true sense

and meaning of the original might be clouded by false glosses of saint-seeming deceivers, that learning may not be buried in the grave of our fathers in the Church and Commonwealth, the Lord assisting our endeavours,—

*"It is therefore ordered,* That every township in this jurisdiction, after the Lord hath increased them to the number of fifty householders, shall then forthwith appoint one within their town to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read, whose wages shall be paid either by the parents or masters of such children, or by the inhabitants in general, by way of supply, as the major part of those that order the prudentials of the town shall appoint: *Provided,* Those that send their children be not oppressed by paying more than they can have them taught for in other towns; and

*"It is further ordered,* That where any town shall increase to the number of one hundred families or householders, they shall set up a grammar school, the master thereof being able to instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the university: *Provided,* That if any town neglect the performance hereof above one year, that every such town shall pay five pounds to the next school until they shall perform this order."

This "old deluder" law, famous and important though it is in educational history, does not contain all the elements of the modern free tax-supported compulsory common school. Though this is a state law, the chief responsibility for education still remains with the parents and the masters of schools. The state is given power to enforce obedience to its provisions, but it is left to the towns to decide whether or not taxes shall be levied to meet the expenses of maintaining the schools. Schools are made compulsory, but not school attendance. The towns must furnish opportunities for education, but there is no provision for compelling parents or pupils to use the opportunities supplied. Children may be educated at home or by private tutors. Free schools are not mandatory. The law required that they be supported either



by the parent whose children attended or by the town by majority vote.

Under the stimulus of this law the schools grew in importance as the Commonwealth expanded. Reading and writing were taught in elementary schools, Latin in the secondary schools, while Harvard constructed a college curriculum with Greek, Latin, Oriental languages, and divinity as the core of the program of studies. In these early days the schools were established, controlled, and partially supported by the towns, but usually they were not free. As costs mounted, the poor were unable to pay the high tuition fees. The growth of democratic sentiment tended to make men frown upon the unequal opportunities. Before the Revolutionary War, therefore, the schools had become generally free. All these changes were embraced within the framework of the law of 1647, although minor modifications were made from time to time, such as increasing the penalties upon towns which did not establish and support schools.

- However, an educational decline had set in before 1700. In the early settlements, partly because of dangers of Indian raids, the population was concentrated at a "center," with the small farms grouped about the church and schoolhouse as the nucleus of the community. As the population increased and the area became more settled, and as the dangers from hostile invaders grew less imminent, the inhabitants tended to distribute themselves throughout the confines of the towns. The single church or school was now insufficient to satisfy the educational needs of the community. Accordingly, a new administrative device was adopted. The single school at or near the center of the town was replaced by a "moving school" which rotated from one part of the town to another. It was kept for several months in one section, the ensuing several months in another, and so on, until all parts of the

town were served. The school pitched its tent wherever it was needed. Even the grammar school circulated in like fashion. Transportation being poor, the roads bad, and travel more or less dangerous, the advantages of the plan soon became apparent. As there arose a desire for longer school terms, the sections which had been served by the "moving schools" now demanded permanent schools of their own, so that the former central school "was replaced by a number of district schools." Thus there evolved a system of local educational autonomy which was to be a millstone around the neck of educational progress. At first the selectmen of the town itself still controlled all the district schools, but eventually the strong sense of independence and of local self-government prevailed, and the districts became practically self-sufficient.

As a result, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, a devastating decline was apparent in the influence and effectiveness of the public schools. Although it would seem that it should have brought a revival, the American Revolution hastened the downward course. Financially exhausted; the new country needed all its strength to solve the problems involved in creating the new government. Material considerations overshadowed the spiritual. Though money was poured into higher institutions of learning, the lower schools were neglected. It was no less a "critical period" for the schools than for the national central government itself.

A major cause of the decline was inherent in the law of 1789. This act made it optional with the town itself whether it should sustain its schools as a unity, or whether school districts should be formed. Although the system was first really applied in Massachusetts, the district school had been legalized in Connecticut in 1701 and then introduced into Rhode Island about 1750. The provision for the territorial sub-

division of towns into school districts was soon adopted in Massachusetts and all but a dozen of the more than three hundred towns in the state were so divided. By this act the powers of taxation and control were still vested in the town itself. Schoolhouses had to be built or repaired with funds raised by voluntary contributions. In 1800 another act still farther emasculated town control. The districts themselves were empowered to assess taxes for sites, buildings and equipment. Still later, in 1817, the districts were given the powers of a corporation, and another decade later (1827) they were legalized, made a political institution, and given power to choose their own teachers. Each law cumulatively weakened effective central control.

The law of 1789, by making districts possible, removed competition between towns for better schools; weakened the interest and contributions of friends of the schools; and made effective supervision impossible. There was no longer a public school spirit. Parents were indifferent. Great illiteracy resulted and general intelligence was at low ebb. Private schools sprang up like mushrooms. They were both a cause and an effect of the decline. Many of the best teachers and best pupils turned to them. In the natural course of events many of the most intelligent and the wealthiest members of the community, having sent their own children to private schools, lost interest. Patrons of the private schools would not give their support to the public schools, and the sentiment was against adequate tax support. Increasingly, a division arose in the community; each type of school had its own clientele. In the popular mind common schools came to mean "pauper schools" attended by children of the poorer classes only. Schoolhouses, small in size and poor in structure, were taught by incapable teachers. Textbooks were inadequate. The niggardly appropriations did not allow effec-

tive supervision, and disorderly schools were common. School terms were short, often not exceeding twelve weeks in the year. Educational vision and leadership were lacking. The contrast between the private and public schools was evident. The youthful students in the common schools had feelings of inferiority instilled into them. The common schools changed from an "institution for the instruction of youth in the fundamental branches of learning, to a school which in some measure partakes of the nature of a university." Pupils wished to pursue studies usually taught in secondary schools and in the university, and the result was loss of time and money for the local district. Little wonder that Mr. Mann, later writing of this law, deplored the effect of the statute: "I consider this, beyond comparison, the most pernicious law ever passed in this Commonwealth, on the subject of schools."<sup>1</sup> His experience had shown him that where the administration remained vested in the town, buildings were superior, teachers were more skilled, and terms were longer. Besides, there was fairer treatment of all sections of the towns.

Under this succession of enervating laws the people became apathetic to the schools, schools became poorer, and the people became still more listless and apathetic. The common schools had become cheap. They had poor support, poor teachers, poor pupils, poor buildings, poor textbooks, poor or nonexistent equipment—and poor *popular* support. Thus the vicious circle was complete. The year 1827 was the low ebb for the schools. The effect of the succession of measures is forcefully stated by a keen analyst:

The school district now, from being a mere social convenience, has become a political institution—*imperium in imperio*. The year

<sup>1</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Eighth Annual Report*, 1844, page 77.

1827, therefore, is a memorable one. It marks the culmination of a process which had been going on steadily for more than a century. It marks the utmost limit to the subdivision of American sovereignty—the high-water mark of modern democracy, and the low-water mark of the Massachusetts school system.<sup>2</sup>

It should be mentioned that the Law of 1827 also removed the last vestiges of ecclesiastical control. In the early days the minister controlled the schools. Gradually this influence lessened. The control of a highly educated ministry was supplanted by a relatively ignorant lay supervision. Although it finally made for strength, the immediate effect was a decreased efficiency in the schools. This was the culmination of a half century of retrogression in the schools.

Not only in Massachusetts, however, was there need of educational advance. The general conditions in the schools were appalling. The "seed-beds of democracy" were bringing forth a dwarfed and stunted crop. In some respects the schools were even worse than in colonial days. In 1834 there were at least 100,000 illiterate voters in the State of Pennsylvania, and more than 25,000 children did not attend school. Governor Campbell, of Virginia, in 1817 found that a fourth of those applying for marriage licenses in the state could not write and that the situation was little improved a score of years later. In 1837, Henry Barnard found that six or seven times as much was being spent per capita for the education in private schools as in public schools. In the same year it was reported that, except in Cincinnati, practically no schools in Ohio were open to rich and poor alike, and that nearly one half of the districts in the state were without schoolhouses. In Massachusetts a third of the schools lacked buildings. The Secretary of the Common

<sup>2</sup> MARTIN, G. H.—*The Evolution of the Massachusetts School System*, page 92. D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1894. Used by permission.



School Society estimated (1839) "the total number of children in the United States between the ages of four and sixteen at 3,500,000; and [that] of this number 600,000 do not enjoy the benefits of a common school education."<sup>3</sup> In New England and New York attendance at common schools was more general than in other states and for a longer period of the year. A third of those in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maine were in private schools or in no school. Beyond New York there were 1,400,000 out of 1,840,000 children of school age who were destitute of common instruction in 1832, but the school systems of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Tennessee, Missouri, Ohio, and Michigan had been improved and the number of children in attendance had increased.<sup>4</sup> No wonder that a prominent historian<sup>5</sup> had stated that at the beginning of the presidency of John Quincy Adams the common school as an American institution was non-existent though it was struggling for existence.

It is a truism that the darkest hour is just before the dawn. Deplorable conditions often call for heroic and drastic action. Democracy was too firmly knitted into the woof and warp of New England thought and tradition for it to be obliterated; the school, democracy's chosen agent, was again to come into its own, though not without a struggle. Certain stirrings, feeble though they were at the beginning, were to usher in a revival of interest and action in educational affairs.

At first individuals, later organizations, sounded the clarion call for advance. In 1823, just a few years prior to the legislation in Massachusetts which finally established the

<sup>3</sup> COMBE, GEORGE—*Notes on the United States of North America in 1838-9-40*, Vol. III.

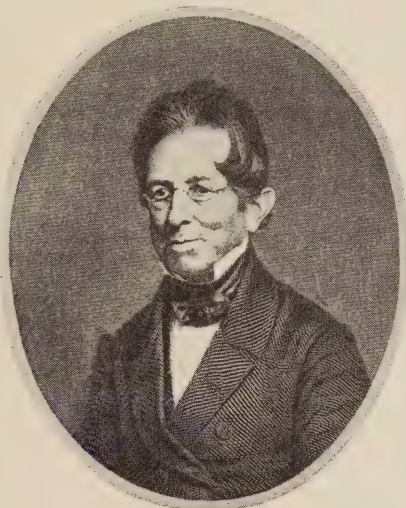
<sup>4</sup> BARNARD, HENRY—"Second Annual Report." *Connecticut Common School Journal*, Vol. II, page 247. July, 1840.

<sup>5</sup> McMASTER, JOHN BACH—*History of the People of the United States*, Vol. V, ch. 49. New York, 1913.

district system as the autonomous unit, three events of moment in educational history occurred. Professor J. L. Kingsley, of Yale College, writing in the April number of the *North American Review*, pleaded for attention to the better preparation of teachers. He urged a plan for training teachers in institutions, one in each county, midway between the common schools and the university. Later in the year William Russell, principal of a New Haven academy, issued a pamphlet entitled *Suggestions on Education*, revealing the imperative needs of the schools and asserting the necessity of adopting a plan for the professional preparation of teachers.

In the same year an event of far-reaching importance occurred in northern Vermont. Rev. Samuel R. Hall was sent to Concord, Vermont, by the Domestic Missionary Society of the Congregational Church and consented to become the pastor of the local church on condition that he be allowed to organize and maintain a normal school for teachers. To this his parishioners consented. Here, singlehanded, without a pattern for guidance, he collected a class of young people whom he instructed in the art of teaching. The school, opened in 1823, was incorporated the succeeding autumn by the legislature. Two years later a grammar school was established in connection with it, enabling him to receive certain monies accruing from the rental of grammar school lands. The second year a regular normal course was begun. During the spring and autumn of each year a series of lectures on the work of teachers was given, which grew into a volume with the caption, *Lectures on School-keeping*, the first printed work in America on the subject of teaching. A practice school of young pupils was maintained, in which pupils might be observed and in which experience in teaching might be gained. In this volume Mr. Hall joined his voice with

those of others who were demanding better prepared teachers. The book contained practical suggestions for the teacher, although for the most part educational theory, as we now understand it, was lacking. The influence of Pestalozzi is reflected in the stress placed upon object teaching, and in the emphasis placed upon the interest of the pupil and upon pleasurable school activities. This practical program of



T. H. GALLAUDET

teacher training, continued after 1830 at Andover, Massachusetts, and later at Plymouth, New Hampshire, afforded a practical demonstration of the needs for, and possibilities in, a well-organized teachers' seminary.

A pamphlet, entitled *Plan of a Seminary for the Instruction of Youth*, from the pen of Rev. Thomas H. Gallaudet, appeared in 1825 in a Hartford newspaper. It was proposed that every state should establish an institution for the specific purpose of preparing teachers for common schools. He,

too, advocated a model school. His essays were widely published and reprinted and were exceedingly influential.

About the same time Mr. James G. Carter in his *Letters to the Honorable William Prescott, L.L.D., on the Free Schools of New England* (1824) and in his *Essays upon Popular Education* (1826) presented a vivid picture of the state of New England education. In both he portrayed the incompetency of teachers, due in large part to the competition of business and the professions.

He deplored the decline in the school's effectiveness. He wrote:

If the policy of the legislature in regard to free schools for the last twenty years be not changed, the institution which has been the glory of New England will, in twenty years more, be extinct.<sup>6</sup>

Lacking the needed support, the common schools would degenerate into "mechanized seminaries," such as were found in Europe, for the education of the poor, while the private institution would furnish improved education for the rich. The leveling influence of the school would be gone, for it "is a more effectual check against an aristocracy of wealth than would be a national jubilee and the equal distribution of property once every fifty years."

More fully than any of his predecessors, he outlined the need for training teachers, and presented a carefully prepared plan for carrying his ideas into execution. He argued that more attention should be paid to this function, and suggested a free state-supported institution, with a suitable library, an experimental school for children, and a governing board which would carry out the wishes of the public, to make his idea effective. He prepared a bill for the legis-

<sup>6</sup> CARTER, JAMES G.—*The Schools of Massachusetts in 1824*. Old South Leaflet No. 135, page 20. Used by permission.

lature. It was defeated by a single vote. His efforts attracted widespread attention; it was in recognition of them that George B. Emerson was led to bestow upon him the title, "Father of the Normal Schools."

In 1825 Mr. Walter R. Johnson, of Germantown, Pennsylvania, independently advocated the establishment of schools for teachers, and President Junkin, of Lafayette College, strongly urged upon the legislature that it establish teacher-training courses in the existing colleges of the state of Pennsylvania. Others advocated better training. Governor DeWitt Clinton, singularly enlightened on the subject, urged upon the legislature in New York the establishment of a seminary for teachers to prepare for service in the monitorial schools. Governors of many other states were aroused and made similar recommendations.

Educational sentiment was augmented, too, by the many educational magazines which were founded and which attracted ready readers. At least forty appeared, some short-lived, others of longer duration. William Russell published the *American Journal of Education* in Boston (1826-1830). It was later continued for six years under the name of *American Annals in Education*. Articles on foreign education and the education of women were printed. *The Common School Assistant* was published in Albany. In Illinois the *Common School Advocate* championed the cause of the schools.

The influence of Europe made itself felt in America. In 1831 Victor Cousin, with a commission from the French Minister of Public Instruction, went to Germany to study the educational system and upon his return prepared a report which had a potent influence. In 1834 an edition in English was published in New York City. Before 1840 parts of it were reprinted in a score of educational magazines in America. It formed the basis of the system of public schools

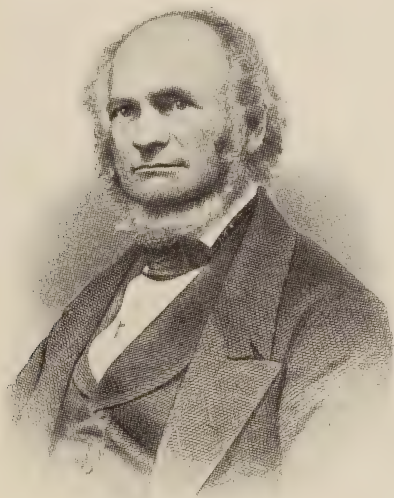


in the State of Michigan. Edward Everett, governor of Massachusetts, knew Cousin in the University of Göttingen. Charles Brooks, who did so much to promote normal schools in Massachusetts, met him as a passenger on a boat coming to America and soon became enthusiastic about the German schools. The thing which most of all had impressed Cousin was the system of inspection and supervision used in the German schools. He was intrigued by the doctrine of a centralized school system. Closely second in his interest was the Prussian program of training teachers in state normal schools.

Alexander D. Bache, newly-elected president of Girard College, just opening its doors to students, was sent to Europe by the trustees with instructions to visit the schools of the leading states in Great Britain, Germany, and the other nations of Western Europe. After his return, in 1839, his observations were published in a report which immediately aroused considerable interest.

Even more important as a stimulus was the report made by Calvin E. Stowe, husband of Harriet Beecher Stowe. He was to visit Europe to secure books for the library of Lane Seminary, where he was a member of the faculty. The legislature of Ohio commissioned him to make a study of the schools of Great Britain, France, Germany, and other states. He was particularly impressed with the importance which the monarchical states of Europe attached to education. His observations were published in the *Prussian System of Public School Education* (1836) and in *Elementary Instruction in Europe*, the latter being the report which he gave to the Ohio legislature in December, 1837. His six months abroad had been profitably spent. He described in minute detail the plan of administration and instruction in the Prussian schools. The Ohio legislature ordered 10,000 copies of his

report printed; it was widely reissued elsewhere, being ordered reprinted by the legislatures of Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Stowe, an able orator, presented his views by lectures to many audiences and aroused a considerable amount of sentiment for the plan. During 1835-1837, Henry Barnard, who was later to exert such a great influence on American education, trav-



CALVIN E. STOWE

eled in Europe to become acquainted with educational problems.

A profound impression was created by these individual voices raised in behalf of education. But there was a need for concerted action. A number of teachers' associations had been organized, but they were ephemeral.

Most influential of all the teachers' organizations was the American Institute of Instruction. Under the leadership of

Francis Wayland, "our American Arnold," first president of the Institute, five hundred delegates from fifteen states met in the hall of the House of Representatives in the State House in Boston, August 19-21, 1830. A permanent organization of the association resulted. Among the noted educators present were Warren Colburn, author of what has been called the greatest educational book of the century, *Colburn's First Lessons in Arithmetic*; W. C. Woodbridge, editor and publisher; William Russell; James G. Carter; Samuel P. Newman; George B. Emerson; G. F. Thayer; and Samuel R. Hall. "No sects nor party had any share in its deliberations; no cliques nor lobbies were busy with their selfish side issues."<sup>7</sup> All had assembled in the great cause of education. An act of incorporation was approved March 4, 1831, by Governor Levi Lincoln. Among the incorporators were T. H. Gallaudet, William Woodbridge, and James G. Carter. The first six annual meetings (until August, 1837) were held in Boston, and until 1840 all meetings were held in Massachusetts. From the meetings radiated an influence which was incalculable. Its members were the leaders in educational reform. In 1836 the Institute petitioned the legislature to create the office of Superintendent of Common Schools for Massachusetts. Again in January of the following year a memorial was sent to the legislature setting forth the deplorable condition of the schools. It is so cogently written that it is worthy of extended quotation. It deplored the

great want of well-qualified teachers . . . their place is supplied by persons exceedingly incompetent in many respects; by young men, in the course of their studies, teaching from necessity, and often with a strong dislike for the pursuit; by mechanics and others wanting present employment; and by persons who, having

<sup>7</sup> SMITH, ELBRIDGE—*The Founders of the Institute and Its First President*. Proceedings, American Institute of Instruction, 1867.

failed in other callings, take to teaching as a last resort, with no qualifications for it and no desire of continuing in it longer than they are obliged by an absolute necessity. . . .

Every school is now liable to have a winter's session wasted by the unskillful attempts of an instructor making his first experiments in teaching. . . .

Such is the known demand for teachers of every kind, with or without qualifications, that candidates present themselves for employment and committees, in despair of finding better, employ them who have no degree of fitness for the work; that committees are obliged to employ to take charge of their children, men to whose incompetency they would reluctantly commit their farms or their workshops; . . .

Finding they cannot get suitable teachers at any price they naturally apportion the salary to the value of the service rendered, and the consequence is, that, in many places the wages of a teacher are below those given in the humblest of the mechanic arts. . . .

Most of the winter schools are taught for about three months in the year; the summer not far from four. They are, therefore, of necessity taught by persons who, for two-thirds or three-fourths of the year, have other pursuits, in qualifying themselves for which they have spent the usual period, and which, of course, they look upon as the main business of their lives. They cannot be expected to make great exertions and expensive preparation for the work of teaching, in which the standard is so low, and for which they are so poorly paid.

Continuing, it is explained that other professions require preparation in

special schools and colleges, with learned and able professors and ample apparatus. . . .

An apprentice to a schoolmaster is known only to tradition. . . .

Common education is to such a degree the palladium of our liberties, and the good condition of the common schools, in which that education is chiefly obtained, so vitally important to the *stability* of our State, to our very *existence* as a *free* State, that it is the most proper subject for legislation. . . .

A very large number of those, of both sexes, who now teach the summer and winter schools are, *to a mournful degree*, wanting in all these qualifications. . . . They are often without experience in managing a school; they have no skill in communicating. . . . In short, they know not *what* to teach, nor *how* to teach, nor in *what spirit* to teach, nor what is the nature of *those* they undertake to *lead*, nor what they are *themselves*, who stand forward to lead them.



GEORGE B. EMERSON

This memorial, signed by George B. Emerson, Samuel R. Hall and others, coming, as it did, when other similar sentiments were being expressed, made a profound impression upon the legislature, and doubtless had great influence in securing the legislation later in the year by which the Board of Education was established, and by which institutions for the preparation of teachers, a main objective of the Institute, were created. In 1842, the report of the Director states: ". . . we may congratulate ourselves upon having been instrumental in the establishment of the Board of Education, of Normal Schools, and many other means of improving and extending popular education." It is recorded in the annual



report of the directors of the Institute in 1847, when a resumé of its work was published, that: "To the exertions of the Institute may be traced the origin of the normal schools, the benefit of which our communities are daily experiencing. The earliest and most powerful advocates of these schools were among the most active members of the Institute."<sup>8</sup>

In recognition of its contribution to the life of the state, the legislature of Massachusetts, beginning 1835, made an annual grant of \$300 to help maintain its activities. In his *Tenth Annual Report*, Horace Mann pays high tribute to its influence when he says:

The Institute may justly be considered the source of all the improvements in education which have since been made in New England and the other Northern States; and its influence is slowly diffusing itself through the uncongenial regions of the South.

Mann, himself, had been a vice president in the organization, having been chosen after his selection as Secretary of the Board of Education.

Elsewhere the educational ferment was at work. The Western Literary Institute and College of Professional Teachers was organized in 1829, at Cincinnati, Ohio. Cincinnati was the largest city of the Great West, having a population in 1830 of 24,831, when Pittsburgh had but 12,542 and Louisville only 10,341 inhabitants. St. Louis was too small to occupy a separate place in the census tables, and Chicago did not exist. Cincinnati was the cultural center of the West and, as such, was foremost in the public school movement in the area. The foundations of the Ohio school system were laid through the efforts of this small group of her citizens. It was this organization which was instrumental

<sup>8</sup> AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION, *Proceedings*, 1847.

in having the Ohio legislature appropriate \$500 to be paid to Professor Calvin E. Stowe when he made his trip to investigate European schools. It was due to the members of a committee appointed by the College that the office of state superintendent of schools was created in Ohio some months before the State of Massachusetts appointed Horace Mann as secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education. The association had a membership covering twenty of the states then composing the Union. Though founded principally as a Mississippi Valley organization, its membership included those from several states on the Atlantic seaboard and from all of those on the Gulf of Mexico. More than the American Institute of Instruction, it was a national group, for the former served almost exclusively a New England constituency in an area not much larger than Ohio. How influential its meetings, which were attended by crowded audiences in the city's largest churches, were may be estimated when it is realized that its delegates were from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Michigan, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, and the Territories of Iowa and Wisconsin. "It was not the creature or product of western schools and education, but their creator."<sup>9</sup> Its aim was declared in the Constitution to be: "To promote by every laudable means the diffusion of knowledge in regard to education, and especially by aiming at the elevation of the character of teachers who shall have adopted instruction as their regular profession." The College has been stated to be the mother of the teachers' institute system in the Western States. Institutes were in session each year for more than a week, opportunity was offered for covering all current phases of education, and a great enthusiasm akin to religious zeal

<sup>9</sup> HINSDALE, B. A.—*Report of Commissioner of Education*. Vol. I. 1898-99.

was aroused in the cause. Affiliated local organizations became the forerunners of the state teachers' associations. During the sixteen years of its existence (1829-1845) no organization was more potent in educational reform.

But it was not professional groups of teachers and educators alone who aroused sentiment for education. The American Lyceum, the mechanics' institutes, workingmen's courses, and similar agencies spread to the general public the message of free and common schools.

The American Lyceum was first suggested to the public by a proposal from the pen of Josiah Holbrook, printed in the *American Journal of Education* (1826). Its purpose as stated by Mr. Holbrook was "for mutual instruction in the sciences and other branches of useful knowledge" and to raise the "moral and intellectual taste of our countrymen." It was to make an especial appeal to the young. In the article the name "lyceum" was not given. But in November of the same year the first official lyceum was organized at Millbury, Massachusetts, and the name *lyceum* is definitely used. During the same season twelve or fifteen other near-by towns organized, and all were combined in the "Worcester County Lyceum." Mr. Holbrook, whose wealth allowed him to do so, now devoted full time to organization work; the movement spread like wildfire. During the first year more than 100 were organized. By 1828 some were found in nearly every state. By 1821, there were 800 to 1,000 town lyceums, fifty or sixty county societies, and several state lyceums. In 1834 there were 3,000 local groups, and five years later four or five thousand. State organizations were formed: in New York, January, 1831; another in Massachusetts, February 25, 1831; and during the same year Maine perfected a third. A national convention was called to meet in New York City, May 4, 1831, at which the three states and a number of

county organizations had delegates; there were representatives from Yale and Dickinson colleges. It is interesting to note the subjects discussed on the floor of the convention:

What is the best way to improve common schools; what are the most eligible and practical means of advancing and perfecting the science of instruction; to what extent is the monitorial system advisable and practicable in common schools; ought manual labor to be encouraged, and upon what general plan; should every boy who can devote his whole time to study until the age of 16 be put to the study of Latin and Greek and, if not, to what class should these languages be restricted; to what extent may lectures be useful in common schools; to what extent can the natural sciences be advantageously introduced into common schools; the object and usefulness of town and district lyceums, what should be the object of county and State lyceums, and should they be formed? <sup>10</sup>

A constitution was adopted which set the pattern of the activities and the plan of organization. The purpose was stated as "the advancement of education, especially in common schools, and the general diffusion of knowledge." <sup>11</sup> Departments, each with a corresponding secretary, were established relating to seven different fields: colleges and their connection with common schools; books, apparatus, and branches of study; legislative provisions for schools; the qualifications of teachers; Lyceums; the natural sciences; methods of instruction and school discipline.<sup>12</sup> In March of that year there had been county conventions in twelve Vermont counties, and two in New Hampshire, all attended by Mr. Holbrook. Before the end of the year 1831, additional state associations were organized in Tennessee

<sup>10</sup> BARNARD, HENRY, editor—"The American Lyceum." *American Journal of Education*, Vol. XIV, 1864, page 541.

<sup>11</sup> *Constitution and By-Laws of the American Lyceum*. Article II.

<sup>12</sup> *By-Laws, American Lyceum*, II.

and Illinois. All strongly recommended weekly and semi-annual meetings of teachers and the use of visible illustrations in schools.<sup>13</sup> In January, 1832, Mr. Holbrook wrote to the corresponding secretary of the Massachusetts Lyceum, setting forth the progress made in the West and the opportunities which existed. He says that state meetings to organize lyceums have been held by the "friends of education" in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee. As an educational organization it was most potent. Horace Mann in his report to the Board of Education (1839) stated that 137 lyceums were in existence in Massachusetts and that there were eight mechanics' institutes.<sup>14</sup>

They were the "open forums" of the day. The inhabitants of a town, city, or district assembled and each one was asked to contribute something from his store of experience for the rest. Home talent and self-help were guiding principles. It was a voluntary gathering which invited all friends of common schools in the cause of universal education. It served as a social institution, giving instruction of a practical nature, and emphasizing instruction in practical natural science. It adapted itself to the needs of any community; any group was able to form a lyceum to suit its own purposes. Its object was "the universal diffusion of knowledge" and to add to the stock of human knowledge.

Weekly discussions, debates, and lectures were held. Discussions were popular and practical. Some were organized as weekly schools. Apparatus was collected and experiments were performed, libraries established, and periodicals obtained. Cabinets of minerals were prepared. A foreign observer writes that "thousands of children, of not more than eight or ten years old, know now more of geology, min-

<sup>13</sup> *American Annals of Education*, March, 1831.

<sup>14</sup> "Third Annual Report," *Common School Journal*, Vol. II, 1840, page 139.



eralogy, botany, statistical facts, etc.—in fine, of what immediately concerns their daily interests and occupations—than was probably known thirty years ago by any five individuals in the United States.”<sup>15</sup> This was before the movement developed into a popular entertainment and lecture course with paid talent.

It has already been noted that Boston occupied a commanding position in the cultural life of America. One of her loyal sons, twitting his fellow citizens upon the place which they held in cultural achievement and which they were convinced they held, had said: “Boston State-House is the hub of the solar system. You couldn’t pry that out of a Boston man if you had the tire of all creation straightened out for a crowbar.”<sup>16</sup> Certainly its leadership was acknowledged by the rest of America as well. In this new movement her citizens soon took a leading place, both in activity and in furnishing leaders as lecturers.

On November 7, 1828, a meeting was held at the Exchange Coffee House in Boston to “take under consideration the subject of the American Lyceum.” Daniel Webster was made chairman and George B. Emerson, secretary, of the assembly. Among the speakers were William Russell and Josiah Holbrook. Edward Everett, then member of Congress, spoke favorably of the institution and expressed interest in its success. Daniel Webster was elected president, and remained in this position for many years. Resolutions were adopted approving the mechanics institutes and lyceums; they especially mentioned the American Lyceum “as comprehending the chief objects of a general association for popular improvement, and the aid and advancement of common education in the primary and other schools.”

<sup>15</sup> WYSE, THOMAS, M. P.—*Publications of the Central Society of Education*, London, Vol. II, 1838. Quoted in *Old South Leaflets*, No. 139.

<sup>16</sup> HOLMES, O. W.—*Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*.

In February, 1829, a meeting was held in the Representatives Hall, Boston, attended by members of the Massachusetts legislature and others to discuss the "state of education of the Commonwealth, and of those associations for promoting it, denominated lyceums." As a result of the meeting, teachers were urged to associate themselves with the lyceums and to set up separate divisions for discussion of their own problems. The following year, a similar meeting was held, presided over by Governor Levi Morton. A state committee was appointed to promote the cause. Among the members was Mr. Mann. Seventy-eight lyceums were reported as active in the state. In a report to the national organization, 27 of the most important towns were shown to have had a total membership of 5,500, an average of more than 200 each. Salem had 1,200 members; Newton, 681; Newburyport, 450; Gloucester, 400; and New Bedford, Haverhill, Charlestown, Boston, and Worcester from 200 to 300 each.<sup>17</sup> At Waltham, it was reported, "Our institute numbers most of the men within a convenient distance and includes from one hundred to two hundred females."

During the first fifteen years or more, there were no paid lecturers, but neighbors furnished the programs and discussions. Later, it was the custom to supply noted personages from the literary, scientific, educational, ecclesiastical, and political worlds. Among those who lectured were Daniel Webster, Henry Thoreau, Theodore Parker, Horace Greeley, Oliver Wendell Holmes, James Russell Lowell, Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, Edward Everett Hale, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. The latter, who had forsaken the cloth, remarked: "The lecture platform is my pulpit. Lyceums—so that people will let you say what you think—are as

<sup>17</sup> HOLBROOK, JOSIAH—*American Annals of Education*, Vol. II, 1832, page 110.

good a pulpit as any.”<sup>18</sup> Wendell Phillips gave his lecture “The Lost Arts” at least two thousand times. Horace Mann was a lecturer whose services were much in demand.

Boston, so vividly and intellectually alive, furnished a ready audience for the lecturers of the day. A foreign lecturer, leading exponent of phrenology and personal friend of Mr. Mann, writes that there is no idle class of men in the United States. In Boston six thousand persons were attending courses of lectures; men of talent of all ranks and professions were appearing as lecturers. Lectures were given once a week, from October to April, at the Odeon under the direction of the Lyceum, where the price of course admission for a gentleman and two ladies is \$2.00. Generally 1,500 attended, while in Salem at the time there were 1,200 subscribers.<sup>19</sup>

A ready forum was furnished for discussion of topics of the day. In the previous chapter it has been indicated that the first quarter of the century, with the two decades thereafter, was a distinct era in the history of New England and of America. Following the War of 1812, “the second war of independence,” predominantly American ideas and movements were coming into the foreground, all converging upon the single urge to establish more firmly and securely the rights of man. The American Peace Society, the Prison Discipline Society, the American Temperance Society, the American Bible Society, the American Tract Society—an outgrowth of the period—all had a chance to be heard.

But of all the reform movements, education was the master enterprise. In it the interests of the masses converged. In creating a background for the educational revival the Lyceum had a large share. It antedated the creation of the

<sup>18</sup> *Emerson in Concord; a Memoir*, page 73.

<sup>19</sup> COMBE, GEORGE—*Notes on the United States in North America*, 1838-1840, Vol. I, pages 152-153.

American Institute of Instruction by a year, and co-operated with it from the beginning. The two organizations had many officers in common, among them being T. H. Gallaudet, G. F. Thayer, W. C. Woodbridge, Josiah Holbrook, William Russell, and George B. Emerson. The Lyceum was among the first of the groups working for a State Board of Education in Massachusetts, urging such action as early as 1829. The *Annals of American Education* was one of two journals officially recognized as organs in which the proceedings were to be printed.

An examination of the resolutions of the national conventions of the American Lyceum shows that they emphasized, among others, the following matters of educational portent: weekly local and semiannual county meetings of teachers and educators; establishment of seminaries for teachers as a part of every system of public instruction (1831); the importance of the 50,000 teachers of America as the molders of the future character and stability of America's institutions; the study of physiology in schools (a prize of \$300 being offered for the best textbook on the subject); female education, and the establishment of female seminaries under endowments and legislative patronage; natural history for schools; nonsectarian discussion of community problems; interest in libraries; geological surveys and studies; preparation of local histories and maps; the collection and use in schools of specimens in geology and natural history; the work of J. J. Audubon in natural history recently completed. They urged the preparation of a textbook on constitutional jurisprudence for the common schools.

The chief contribution of the American Lyceum in the field of public education was in impressing on the public mind the importance of the teacher's office and work. Teachers themselves were made conscious of the supreme

contribution they were making to American life. Teachers' associations arose under its influence. Though none are mentioned in the educational magazines of the time when the Lyceum began its work, by 1833 the activities of many are recorded. Parents and other citizens were engaged in discussion and were united, although belonging to conflicting and opposing cultural, political, social, and religious groups.



JOSIAH HOLBROOK

The importance of education came to the forefront in the average man's thinking.

The Lyceum also led in advocating a system of state control over the common schools for which it created a background of popular interest and sympathy. In Massachusetts it worked to secure a State Board of Education, and assisted in the movement which culminated in the selection of that Board, while Edward Everett, who was himself a national vice president of the American Lyceum from its inception, was governor.

Thus was borne out the hope and the judgment of early



educational leaders. William Russell had stated in 1828: "This institution (lyceum) seems to us the most effectual and extensive means yet devised for the improvement of popular education as conducted in district schools." And Henry Barnard, entering upon his new duties as secretary of the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools in Connecticut, wrote: "The increase of active and well-conducted lyceums in this state (Connecticut) and at this season is much to be desired as one of the most direct and effectual means of directing the attention of the people to the importance of improving the schools."

The influence of the colleges in Massachusetts upon common school education had been indirect rather than direct. Perhaps the most influential, both because of its proximity to Boston and its close connection with the state which contributed to its support, was Harvard. About 1820, Warren Colburn and James G. Carter were there as students of George B. Emerson. All three were eminent teachers; Mr. Emerson as the first principal of the English High School, in Boston; Mr. Carter in his own home town of Lancaster; and Mr. Colburn, in Boston. About the same time Charles Brooks, Samuel J. May, and W. R. Johnson—a trio who were to be among America's educational leaders—were graduated. Edward Everett, after spending some years in Europe, had returned to America to become one of Harvard's most beloved and revered instructors; he exerted a quickening influence on the intellectual life of the students.

Williams and Amherst, the former just having chosen Mark Hopkins as president, the latter having been founded as an Orthodox protest against the theological views of Harvard, now Unitarian in influence, were as yet relatively unimportant in state affairs. All were small, Harvard graduating 39 in 1836; Amherst, 38; Williams, 29. When Amherst

was chartered, state subsidies to Williams and Harvard were discontinued, and have never been restored.

The education of women had been receiving considerable attention. A charter for Mount Holyoke, a female seminary, was granted in 1836, and here, with Mary Lyon as president, was opened to middle-class girls, at much less expense than in most prevailing seminaries, an institution of higher learning for girls; ninety students were admitted.

Good schools did not come without a struggle. Though there were many crusaders in the cause and though strong champions supported the idea, there was determined opposition. Two groups could be depended upon to support the cause of the schools in the struggle: the intellectuals who were influenced by the transcendental and humanitarian teachings of the day; and the labor leaders. Workingmen espoused the cause and refused to support politically those who did not favor public schools. There were two main sources of opposition: the wealthy taxpayers and the well-to-do classes, who paid for the education of their own children and were unable to see the justice in taxing them to pay for the education of the children of their less fortunate neighbors; and the apathy among the voting masses, many of whom were uneducated themselves and could not see the benefits to accrue from schooling. The crying need of the day was education for democracy rather than for the production of scholars. To meet the opposition required a constant campaign through public agitation. Public school organizations were formed, educational journalism arose, teachers organized, and leaders in thought agitated from the public rostrum.

The basic forces of the advance of democracy, the expansion of industry, the growth of the cities, the new type of immigrant, the opening of the western frontier, the changes

taking place in the home, the changed conditions of society, all were forces which created a need for more intensive public education. Through the leadership of the day these underlying forces were pushing to vocal expression. It was at this juncture that the Massachusetts Board of Education was created, and Horace Mann was selected as its first secretary.

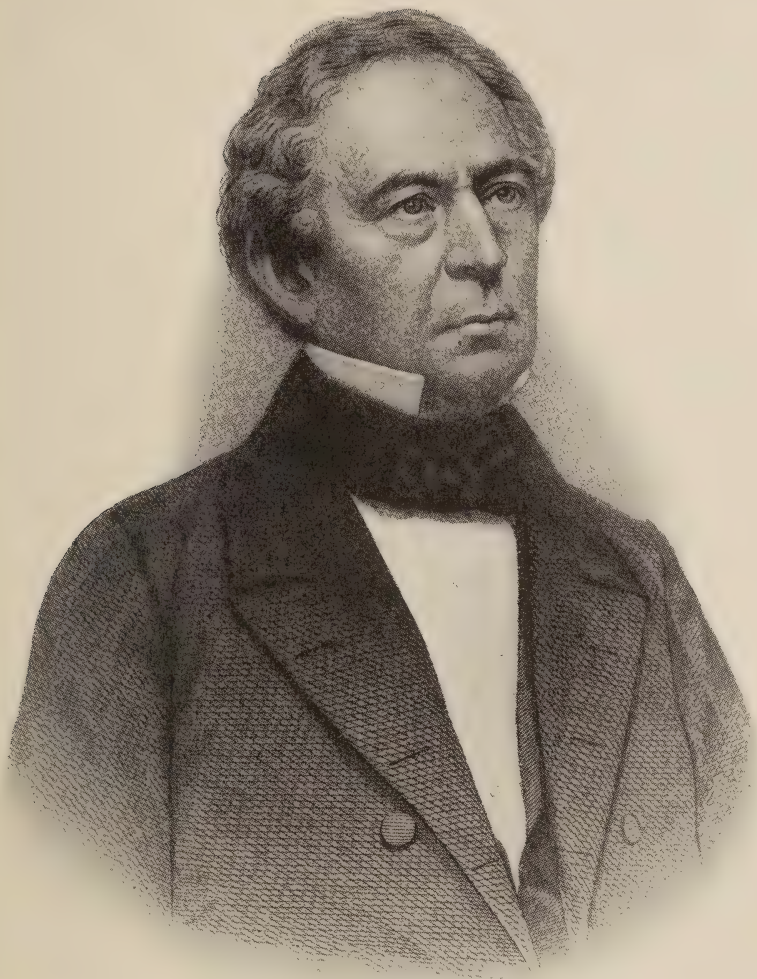
## CHAPTER VII

### SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

THE leaven of agitation which had resulted from the efforts of interested individuals and organizations, such as the American Lyceum and the American Institute of Instruction, had not been working in vain. Intellectual interest reached a climax in 1837 when Ralph Waldo Emerson gave the Phi Beta Kappa address at Harvard on the *American Scholar*, a production which has been called the American Declaration of Independence. Early in the same year the American Institute presented its memorial to the legislature. In it a recommendation was made that a Superintendent of the Public Schools of the Commonwealth should be appointed to serve for a period of years. The suggestion fell on fertile soil. Fortunately for the state and for the cause of education, legislative leadership was at the time in the hands of sympathetic and forward-looking men.

Edward Everett, governor since 1836, was allied with the progressive wing of his day. In politics he was a Whig, in religion, a Unitarian. Having traveled and studied in Europe after his graduation from college, he had returned to his *alma mater* at Harvard as a teacher (1817-1822). A thorough scholar and brilliant teacher, he was said by Emerson to have exerted an influence in Harvard and Cambridge "comparable to that of Pericles in Athens."<sup>1</sup> He had served ten years in the House of Representatives. He was a pioneer

<sup>1</sup> MORISON, S. E.—*Three Centuries of Harvard*, page 229. The Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1936. Used by permission.



*Edward Everett.*

GOVERNOR AND PRESIDENT OF THE FIRST MASSACHUSETTS BOARD  
OF EDUCATION



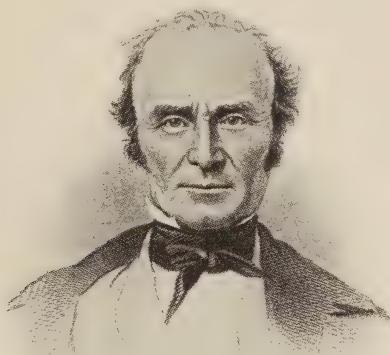
in the Lyceum movement and was one of the most distinguished lecturers of the day. As vice president of the American Lyceum, he exerted great influence upon his generation. In his first governor's message (January, 1836) he urged education as "the solid basis of equality, the most effectual means of redressing the hardships of fortune." He pointed out that while the state left its citizens free from interference with the law in almost all other respects, it had compelled them to support free schools for the education of the people, because it had always laid "the cornerstone of the social edifice on the intelligence of the people."

Horace Mann, always a champion of humanitarian causes and sympathetic to education, was president of the senate. James G. Carter, sturdy advocate of better schools, was chairman of the Committee on Education in the house of representatives, and Josiah Quincy, Jr., was chairman of the house committee. Many other friends of the cause were seated in the legislature.

Coincident with the presentation of the memorial by the American Institute, Governor Everett, addressing the two branches of the legislature at the opening of the session, called attention to the distribution of funds by the National Government under the terms of the Surplus Fund Act, and suggested that Massachusetts might use her share either for constructing the Western Railroad between Worcester and Albany or in enlarging her support of the common schools. Recognizing the great social contribution of the schools, he stressed the importance of more commodious buildings, a lengthened school term, scientific apparatus, libraries, and other equipment. Above all he saw the need for well-qualified teachers.

To effect the changes in the schools which were so urgently needed, he raised the question with the legislature as to

“whether the creation of a board of commissioners of schools to serve without salary, with authority to appoint a secretary on a reasonable compensation, to be paid from the school fund, would not be of great utility.” He reminded the lawmakers that Massachusetts always considered her schools as resources more valuable than money, and her children as the supreme wealth of the state. A group from Bristol County endorsed the recommendation.



JAMES G. CARTER

The memorial from the American Institute and other communications, as well as those portions of the governor's address relating to education, were referred to the proper committees of the houses. A bill, written by Carter and reported to the house, was defeated in that body by a vote of 113 to 61. But Mr. Carter, zealous and undaunted in the cause, induced the house to discuss the measure in the committee of the whole. The bill was duly passed and signed by Mr. Mann as president of the senate (April 20, 1837). It

was of epochal importance not only to Massachusetts but to the country as a whole.

As created, the Board of Education consisted of ten members: the governor and lieutenant governor, members *ex officio*; and eight additional members appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the council. With the exception of the governor and lieutenant governor, each was to serve for a term of eight years, provided, however, that the term of office of one member was to expire each year, the first named to withdraw at the end of the first year, the second at the end of the second year, etc., until the whole appointed membership should change. In case of vacancy by death, resignation, or otherwise, the governor had power to fill the vacancy with the advice and consent of the council, as in the case of original appointments.

It was the duty of the Board to prepare a printed abstract of the school returns for presentation to the legislature before the opening of their session. This superseded a report formerly made by the Secretary of State. It was empowered to appoint its own secretary and fix a reasonable compensation, not to exceed one thousand dollars per annum, for his services.<sup>2</sup> Under the direction of the Board, it was the secretary's duty to collect information about the common schools and other means of popular education, and to diffuse throughout the state information about the best methods of arranging studies and instructing the young.

It was also made mandatory upon the Board to make a detailed report of its work including observations and sug-

<sup>2</sup> By a law enacted April 21, 1838, a salary of fifteen hundred dollars a year was provided for the secretary. Salaries for public office at the time were small. The salary of members of the Legislature in Massachusetts in 1837 was \$2.00 a day, and in that year a proposal to increase the *per diem* to \$2.50 a day was defeated. In Indiana the salary of the governor was \$1,500 a year, and members of the legislature received \$3.00 a day. See *Boston Transcript*, Feb. 8 and Feb. 12, 1837.

gestions which might prove useful in improving and extending educational opportunities. It is important to note that the Board was not given power to execute its degrees, because its powers were limited to recommendation only. Whatever was done had to be performed through persuasion and education rather than through bureaucratic mandate. Strong central control was impossible among a people with such a keen sense of self-determination and such a tradition of self-government as the Puritans of New England had inherited. In our own day such extreme lack of centralized control seems a liability. But a hundred years ago, when there were few if any full-time state administrative officers, and when the duties now found in state departments of education were performed by other state officers (usually the secretary of state), the Massachusetts law was a long forward step. For now the office of the secretaryship was to be dignified in the eyes of the people by providing a full-time incumbent, and the new Board of Education, if wisely chosen, could become a generator of public opinion and a firm bulwark of support against the attacks and hostility of opposed groups.

The great importance of the legislation was immediately sensed by Mr. Mann as is shown by the entry in his journal just after the membership of the Board had been announced (May 27, 1837):

This I believe to be like a spring, almost imperceptible, flowing from the highest tableland, between oceans, which is destined to deepen and widen as it descends, diffusing fertility and beauty in its course; and nations shall dwell upon its banks. It is the first great movement towards a system of common education, which shall at once be thorough and universal. Every civilized state is imperfectly organized, without a minister or secretary of instruction, as it would be without ministers or secretaries of State, Finance, War, or the Navy.

The governor exercised great care in his choice of members of the Board. He himself was keenly aware of the importance of the enactment, and was a leader of educational thought. In making the appointments he had consulted with different friends of education.<sup>3</sup> To secure general public support consideration was given to the blocs and parties into which the state was divided. Of course the prime consideration was the appointee's fitness for the position. But religious views, political affiliations, geographical distribution, and the general reputation of the nominee with the people were factors taken into account. So far as possible all groups and all regions were considered.

Besides Governor Everett and Lieutenant Governor George Hull, members *ex officio*, the following eight appointed members, with terms expiring in the order named, constituted the first Board: James G. Carter, Emerson Davis, Edmund Dwight, Horace Mann, Edward A. Newton, Robert Rantoul, Jr., Thomas Robbins, and Jared Sparks. Mr. Mann who had been consulted about the appointments and had personal knowledge of the basis upon which they were made describes the composition of the group:

Two members were taken from the House of Representatives,—one of them a distinguished leader of the Democratic party, and an ardent and able friend of the schools,—the other the Chairman of the Committee on Education, and one of the best writers on the subject we ever had. One member was taken from the Senate, probably because he was president of that body, at that time. These three appointments were made, so I have reason to believe, without the slightest reference to the religious denominations to which the appointees belonged. Two lay members were then taken, who were incumbents of no office,—one an opulent merchant who

<sup>3</sup> The matter had been discussed at least with Mr. Carter and Mr. Mann. See Edward Everett *Papers*, 1836, page 125, in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society and *The Common School Controversy*, pages 27-28. Boston, 1840.



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

to all persons to whom these presents shall come  
Greeting:



Edward Everett

Whereas, in and by an Act, approved on the twentieth day of April, now last past, it is provided as follows: His Excellency the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Council, is hereby authorized to appoint eight persons, who together with the Governor and Lieutenant Governor ex officio, shall constitute and be denominated the Board of Education; and the persons so appointed, shall hold their offices for the term of eight years: provided, the first person named in said board shall go out of office at the end of one year, the person next named, shall go out of office at the end of two years, and each of the remaining members, one retiring each year and in the order in which they are named, till the whole be so changed, and the Governor with the advice and consent of the Council as aforesaid, shall fill all vacancies in said board, which may occur from death, resignation or otherwise."

Now therefore, be it known that We, by our Governor with the advice and consent of the Council, reposing full confidence in the learning and discretion of James S. Carter of Lancaster, Emerson Davis of Westfield, Edmund Dwight and Horace Mann of Boston, Edward A. Everett of Westfield, Robert Rantoul Junr. of Gloucester, Thomas Robbins of Rochester, and Jared Sparks of Cambridge, do appoint and constitute them to be, in conjunction with the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, the Board of Education, contemplated and authorized in said Act. And they shall exercise all the powers and discharge all the duties incumbent upon them under the provisions thereof.

In testimony of which, We have caused our Great Seal to be hereunto affixed, this twenty fifth day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty seven and of the Independence of the United States the thirty first.

By His Excellency the Governor  
with the advice and consent of the Council

John C. Bigelow  
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Courtesy Massachusetts Historical Society

OFFICIAL NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT OF FIRST BOARD OF EDUCATION

had long felt a deep interest in the public schools, and who has since given substantial proofs of that interest. He is a Unitarian. The other was an orthodox Episcopalian (Mr. Newton, himself), who resided in the western part of the State, and whom no one will suspect of compromising his own religious views, or those of the sect to which he belongs. This left three vacant seats. To one of these Mr. Sparks, the historian, formerly a Unitarian clergyman, was appointed; and to the others, two Orthodox Evangelical clergymen, Mr. Davis, of Westfield, and the Rev. Mr. Robbins, of Rochester. Such was the original constitution of the Board. Three were appointed in reference respectively to the different political parties to which they belonged, and the offices conferred upon them by the popular will; two laymen as such, a Unitarian and an Episcopalian; one ex-clergyman, a Unitarian, and two officiating Orthodox clergymen,—a larger number than was *apportioned* to any one other single consideration. A majority of the original appointees were, as I suppose, Unitarians, as a majority of the Board now were Orthodox, but no difference of opinion, founded on denominational views, has ever existed at the Board, with the single exception of Mr. Newton's objecting to the School Library, because for the purpose of excluding sectarian and partisan works, it was decided that each book should be unanimously approved, and for which cause, after attempting in vain to effect a reconsideration of the vote, he resigned his seat.<sup>4</sup>

Because the religious issue was to loom so large and the discussions were to be carried on with such intensity, it should be noted here that actually the Board was predominantly Whig in politics and Unitarian in religion. During its first year, nine of the ten members were Whigs, Robert Rantoul, Jr., being the only Democrat. Seven were Unitarians, one an Episcopalian, the remaining two, Congregationalists. Though the appointments were doubtless made with sincerity of purpose, it can readily be seen how, when religious and political rancor was much more common

<sup>4</sup> *The Common School Controversy*, Boston, 1840, pages 27-28.

than now, opponents would seize upon these facts and capitalize them. Particularly was the religious issue to be injected, because the recent defection of orthodox churches to join the new Unitarian movement had left much bitterness.

It was a distinguished group of public-minded and eminent men. Few, if any, educational boards in the century that followed have been composed of men of such insight and broad statesmanship. Governor Everett, former instructor at Harvard and member of Congress, showed himself keenly alive to the educational interests of the Commonwealth. His later election as President of Harvard confirms the high quality of his leadership. His prominence in the state coupled with courageous action gave the project immediate prestige. He gave freely of his time and effort to promote the cause. During his term of office twenty-four meetings of the Board were held. He attended every one of them. As chairman of most of the subcommittees he put forth great effort. The first three reports to the legislature were written by his own hand. By his messages to the legislature and by public addresses, notably those at Lexington and Barre, he created public sentiment. A contemporary writes: “. . . no other hand, perhaps, than that which then held the helm of state, could have safely piloted the little bark through the rough sea of jealousy and opposition.”<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Hull, the lieutenant governor, likewise added the prestige of his office.

James G. Carter had already been widely known as a prominent leader among the teachers. Graduated at Harvard, a successful school man, he was among the earliest to demand improvement in the schools. He was an organizer and charter

<sup>5</sup> LORING, JAMES SPEAR—*The Hundred Boston Orators Appointed by the Municipal Authorities and Other Public Bodies from 1770 to 1852*, page 546. Boston, 1852. Quoted from the *Christian Examiner*.

member of the American Institute of Instruction, a member of the Massachusetts Legislature, who, as chairman of the committee on education in the house, had written the law creating the Board of Education, and was in large part responsible for its enactment. At the time he was conducting a private school at Lancaster and was favorably known.

Emerson Davis, salutatorian in the Class of 1821 at Williams College, had served his *alma mater* as a tutor for a short time, after which he served as principal of the Westfield Academy until 1836. He had written a textbook on botany. Resigning the principalship of the academy, he became pastor of the First Congregational Church of Westfield. Later, he was to become principal of the Westfield State Normal School and was, for many years prior to his death, vice president of Williams College.<sup>6</sup>

No member was more interested or performed a greater service than Edmund Dwight. He had an educational inheritance, his father having been a second cousin of President Timothy Dwight, of Yale. In common with many young men of the day he read law after graduation, but forsook his legal studies for a business career. He traveled and studied two years in Europe, and was especially impressed with German and Swiss institutions for the training of teachers. Originally in the banking business, he later became one of Massachusetts' most prominent manufacturers and was a leading owner in the textile industry. He had established four factories at Chicopee Falls, near Springfield, Massachusetts. By 1841 his company at Holyoke employed three thousand persons. He was a member, later president, of the Board of Directors of the Western Railroad connecting Worcester and Albany. Always influential with the legislature, he was

<sup>6</sup> LOCKWOOD, JOHN H.—*Westfield and Its Historic Influences, 1669-1919*. Westfield, 1922.

elected a representative in 1840 and served for several years. As a merchant prince he was a contemporary and associate of the Eliots, the Appletons, and the Lawrences, all prominent families in the business and social life of Boston. He was a liberal philanthropist and education became with him a favored cause. Inspired by Cousin's reports, he showed intense interest in the common schools. After a number of private consultations with Mr. Mann, a meeting was called in his home during the winter of 1837 to consider the subject of the creation of a board of education. He was the center of the group that devised the school law of 1837. Wishing a capable secretary in the newly created position, he supplemented the salary appropriated by the legislature by \$500 a year; he continued to pay this sum until his death and in his will made provision that it should be paid for an additional three years—sixteen in all.<sup>7</sup> He conferred frequently with Governor Everett about the organization of the Board and the choice of a secretary. After his death the Board of Education recognized his influence and his valued services in the *Thirteenth Annual Report* in the following words: "It was through his exertions, perhaps, more than any other individual, that this Board was established, and through his liberality, more than that of all others, that it was enabled to prosecute the system of measures which had resulted in whatever of success it has achieved."

Of the fitness and capability of Horace Mann, the next-named member, there is no doubt. The subsequent description of his career as Secretary leaves no question about his compelling genius.

The Western section of the State was represented by E. A. Newton, a Canadian by birth, a resident of Pittsfield. He

<sup>7</sup> Vol. 147, page 187, *Case No. 36089, Suffolk County Court House, Boston, Mass.*



had been a partner in the most important agency house of the day in Calcutta, India. He had been accepted in the best society; successful business ventures enabled him to retire in 1825 and to devote his time to philanthropy. As an active layman in the Episcopal church he was a member of the General Board of Missions of the denomination. For many years he was a trustee of Williams College. Conservative and aristocratic, he cast his lot, politically, first with the Federalist Party, then with the Whig Party when it arose to ascendancy. He was somewhat skeptical of the republican form of government. After a short period, finding himself out of harmony with the policies of the Board, he resigned. He seems never to have engaged in any of its activities.<sup>8</sup>

Robert Rantoul, an ardent Democrat, had distinguished himself as a reformer interested in promoting the common man's cause. He had served in the legislature for three years, having been elected from the town of Gloucester. A lawyer by profession, he had never received the patronage of the wealthy, but had served poor clients. Like Judge Story, the eminent jurist, he had endured persecution at the hands of the well-to-do. He denounced the methods used by the large industrial corporations of the day, holding that the rights of man were higher than property rights. He was always on the side of freedom. He advocated temperance and championed religious tolerance. He was the outstanding leader in a movement to abolish capital punishment. In his later years he succeeded to the seat of Daniel Webster in the United States Senate when Mr. Webster resigned to become Secretary of State, and he was elected to the National House of Representatives. He was an energetic promotor of the

<sup>8</sup> RANDALL, REV. GEORGE M.—*A Commemorative Discourse on the Death of the late Hon. Edward A. Newton*. Boston, 1862.

lyceum movement. He was a staunch friend of public education.<sup>9</sup>

Rev. Thomas Robbins achieved the unusual distinction of graduating from both Yale and Williams colleges in the same year (1796). He was an omnivorous reader. He had early pledged himself to add a hundred volumes to his library each year. As teacher and minister, always a student, he collected one of the largest libraries of his generation, numbering thousands of volumes, and including the largest collection of Bibles in the country. He assisted in founding the Connecticut Historical Society, and in later life, through the influence of Henry Barnard, he was chosen as its librarian.<sup>10</sup>

Jared Sparks was appointed to the full eight-year term. He had been ordained to the Unitarian ministry by William Ellery Channing. For seven years he had edited the *North American Review*, after which he had traveled in Europe and had completed and published his *Writings of George Washington*. He was appointed a professor at Harvard while serving on the Board, and like Everett, he was to become president of Harvard.

Members of the Board served without salary. Except to pay the secretary, they had no funds even for their own expenses. Their duties were onerous. No legal powers, "either restraining or directory," were given them. "Their only resource, the only sinews of their strength, are their power of appealing to an enlightened community, to rally for the promotion of its dearest interests." So writes Mr. Mann.<sup>11</sup> But this process of education was utilized to the full. By

<sup>9</sup> HAMILTON, LUTHER, editor.—*Memoirs, Speeches, and Writings of Robert Rantoul, Jr.* Boston, 1854.

<sup>10</sup> TARBOX, INCREASE, editor.—*Diary of Thomas Robbins, D. D.*, Vol. II. Boston, 1886.

<sup>11</sup> MANN, HORACE.—*Lectures and Annual Reports on Education*, page 40. Boston, 1872.

extensive correspondence, by personal conversations, by collecting and diffusing information, by enunciating fundamental principles governing public education—by all these, and others, the Board marshalled support for the movement in the popular mind.

An immediate duty of the highest importance was the selection of a secretary. Since this was to be a full-time office, and because the incumbent would represent the whole movement objectively to the people, the success of the whole project hung upon a careful and wise choice. By many it was thought that the mantle of this office would fall upon Mr. Carter. He had labored intensely to stimulate interest in teaching, his standing was high among his associates, and he was influential in the legislature. His election did not seem an unreasonable expectation, in view of the superior qualifications which he exhibited. But largely through the influence of Edmund Dwight, he was passed over and Horace Mann was chosen in his stead.

We have already seen Mr. Mann's interest in humanitarian affairs. Although his actual teaching experience had been limited and although he was not a professional educator, he had delivered public addresses, written for the newspapers, and spoken before the American Institute of Instruction in behalf of education. As a school committeeman he had visited the schools. As a statesman he saw the schools and the universal education of the people as the only hope of Massachusetts, if she was to regain and maintain her place of relative importance among the states. A prominent contemporary educator, in discussing Mr. Mann's qualifications for the position, wrote:

No teacher, and no other individual living, with perhaps one exception, could have been found so deeply versed in what may be called the externals of the schools,—the laws, their bearing

upon the schools and on each other, and the duties of committeemen and others in reference to the schools.<sup>12</sup>

A teacher, caught up with techniques, methods, and other details of school procedure, might have failed to see the broader implications of the schools as instruments and servants of the state in a great program of social reform and advance, and as the source of social progress and prosperity. This idea was new in Massachusetts. There was no professional supervision of schools in the modern sense. Until 1827 the clergy had large powers of control. Now they were generally managed by municipal authorities or town councils. Demands for popular election of school officials were frequent and the demand was supported by a large section of the press. But Mr. Mann, with his accustomed insight and acumen, saw a potential agency of social progress emasculated by local inefficient control.

In whatever he did, Mr. Mann was in deadly earnest. He was a "Puritan of the Puritans." His sensitive conscience matched his alert intellectual powers. To his large vision problems presented themselves in the light of their fundamental implications. If he believed in a cause, he was its champion, ready to efface himself to bring about its triumph. A ready and vigorous speaker, he was prepared to wage effective and persistent battle with a flow of logical argument and an incisive and devastating oratory turned upon his opponent.

The interest of the common man was a consuming passion with him. His earnest work in establishing the hospital for the insane, his support of the institution for the blind, his temperance activities, his energetic efforts in behalf of the

<sup>12</sup> EMERSON, GEORGE B.—*Observations on a Pamphlet, Entitled "Remarks on the Seventh Annual Report of the Hon. Horace Mann, Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education,"* page 14. Boston, 1844.

Negro's freedom—all these bespoke a mind and a man aglow with the fervor of reform.

By nature his mind was keen and analytical. His legal training had brought him to see large problems. He had vision, but he was not visionary. He was a practical man among men. He rose rapidly to great political influence at a time when Boston, his residence, was the country's center of culture and political wisdom. No pigmy could have commanded the respect of men like Charles Sumner, Edward Everett, and John Quincy Adams. Though an idealist, he was able to match wits with the keenest in support of his views and to win them to his support.

Always a voluminous reader, he had the power of ready illustration. Skilled in the use of language, brilliant, witty, sincere, vigorous, and forceful, maintaining an unsullied reputation for honesty, he had the qualities which would rally the public to his standard.

Undoubtedly his long and successful career in public life was a prime asset. For a decade he had been continuously a member of the state legislature, first in the house, then in the senate, the last two years as president of the upper house. He knew and was favorably known by leading men in the state. In prestige with the public he far exceeded any teacher or educator of the time. Because the major task before the Board of Education was to arouse public opinion, and because the task was administrative and political rather than primarily professional, all of these experiences were elements of strength in his qualifications for the position. It was a task for the highest educational statesmanship.

Mr. Mann had labored in behalf of the bill creating the Board without thinking of himself in connection with either the Board of Education or the secretaryship. Popular and respected by all groups, he might have had reasonable ex-



✓  
Boston June 29<sup>th</sup> 1837.

Dear Sir,

The undersigned have great pleasure in communicating the result of the recent balloting for a Secretary of the Board of Education - You were elected to that office & it will gratify us to announce to the board your acceptance of the same at their appointed meeting at 9 o'clock to-morrow morning -

Geo Hull } Committee  
Elihu D. Davis }

Hon<sup>ble</sup> Horace Mann

Courtesy Massachusetts Historical Society

LETTER FROM COMMITTEE OF BOARD OF EDUCATION, NOTIFYING MANN OF  
HIS APPOINTMENT AS SECRETARY

pectations to look forward to election to any office within the power of the electorate to confer upon him.<sup>13</sup> It was much to his surprise, therefore, when he was called to the office. The secretaryship was offered June twenty-nine. Should he accept it? He had risen rapidly in the law and was enjoying an income of about three thousand dollars a year. As president of the senate he held an enviable position in public life. Should he make the sacrifice, for it was a sacrifice, deserting his profession, and meet the challenge of a new and untried position? With the single exception of Dr. Channing, noted Boston clergyman and leader of thought, his friends advised against such a course, deeming wealth, social position, political prospects as prizes which he could not give up lightly. The wealthy, the prominent, the intellectual leaders were occupied with other things and knew little about, and consequently gave little thought to, the plight of the schools. Allowing even for the gloominess of spirit in which Mr. Mann found himself during one of his most strenuous contests, which may have led him to overstate the difficulties involved, the position could not be considered a sinecure. After serving seven years Mr. Mann wrote of the task in retrospect:

So arduous have been its duties, so meagre its compensation when considered in connection with the expenses attending it, and so remote is it from the line of public honors or promotion, that, so far as I know, there has never been a single competitor for it. . . . The laboriousness of my duties, the scantiness of my pay, after deducting necessary expenses (and every dollar of my salary from the beginning, has been devoted to the cause), and the thankless nature of the services rendered, have repelled all from competition with me.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Editorial, *Norfolk Democrat*, October 9, 1852.

<sup>14</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Reply to the Remarks of the Thirty-One Boston Schoolmasters*, pages 170-171.

To accept the office would entail great financial sacrifice. The "reasonable compensation" which the secretary was to receive was fixed by the Board at one thousand dollars, payable quarterly. With the additional sum given by Edmund Dwight the total salary was fifteen hundred dollars. No office was provided nor were funds available for clerical assistance. In the beginning no allowance was made for postage or stationery. During the whole term of his administration he never charged so much as half of it. No provision was made for purchasing books so badly needed in keeping informed on educational developments. During the first five years no allowance was ever made for traveling expenses, although four months of each year were consumed in going about the state on official duties. Except for such voluntary service as he could enlist he had to do his own writing and copying.

Weighed against the handicaps to personal advancement, the obscurity of the position, and the inadequate financial remuneration, was the greatness of the opportunity to enlist himself in a great cause. "A more important and responsible office, bearing more effectually, if well executed, upon the coming welfare of the State, than any other office in it," he wrote in his *Journal*.<sup>15</sup> "Ought I," he writes some days later, "to think of filling this high and responsible office? Can I adequately perform its duties? Will my greater zeal in the cause than others, supply the deficiency in point of talent and information? Whoever shall undertake that task must encounter privation, labor and infinite annoyance from an infinite number of schemers. He must condense the steam of enthusiasts and soften the rock of the incredulous. What

<sup>15</sup> May 6, 1837. The *Journal*, now in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society, was kept from May 4, 1837, to May 1, 1843.

toil in arriving at a true system himself; what toil in infusing that system into the minds of others!"

A month later, as the time for the election of the secretary draws near, he meditates:

I cannot think of that station, as it regards myself, without feeling both hopes and fears, desires and apprehensions, multiplying in my mind. So glorious a sphere, should it be crowned with success, so heavy with disappointment and humiliation, should it fail through any avoidable misfortune. What a thought, to have the future minds of such multitudes dependent in any perceptible degree upon one's own exertions! It is such a thought as must mightily energize or totally overpower any mind, that can adequately comprehend it.

On June 28 he wrote to Mr. Dwight, with whom he had had numerous conferences, that he would accept the position, if tendered, and mentioned the terms upon which his acceptance depended. He did not deceive himself about the difficulties which were ahead. Yet the opportunities challenged him. He entered his reflection in his diary again:

Here stands my mind ready to undergo the hardships and privations to which I must be subjected and to encounter the jealousy, the misinterpretation and the prejudice, almost certain to arise,—here stands my mind ready to meet them in the spirit of a martyr. Tomorrow will probably prescribe for me a course of life. Let it come! I know one thing; if I stand by the principles of truth and duty, nothing can inflict upon me any permanent harm. If I do not succeed in the task I will lay claim at least to the benefit of the saying, that in great attempts it is glorious even to fail.<sup>16</sup>

The next day the formal invitation to accept the office came from the committee in charge:

The path of usefulness is opened before me. My present purpose is to enter into it. Few undertakings, according to my apprecia-

<sup>16</sup> *Journal*, pages 31 and 32, June 28, 1837.

Boston June 30<sup>th</sup> 1837,

To His Honor George Hull & to  
Rev. Emerson Davis.

Gentlemen, I received your communication last evening, informing me that I have been selected this Secretary by the Board of Education. I accept the Office with gratitude, but at the same time, with such a conscious want of my inadequacy, as inspires me with the most strenuous desire that the Board will give me their constant guidance & cooperation in the discharge of its duties.

Be pleased, Gentlemen, to make known to the Board, my sincere acknowledgments for this testimonial of their favor, & to accept for them & for yourselves the assurances of my respect & esteem,

Horace Mann  
His Honor Geo. Hull. & the Rev. Emerson Davis } Com<sup>rs</sup>

Courtesy State Department of Education of Massachusetts

LETTER OF HORACE MANN ACCEPTING THE SECRETARYSHIP OF THE  
MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF EDUCATION



tion of it, have been greater. I know of none which may be more fruitful of beneficial results. God grant me an annihilation of selfishness, a mind of wisdom, a heart of benevolence! How many men I shall meet who are accessible only through a single motive, or who are incased in prejudice or jealousy, or need, not to be subdued but to be remodeled! . . . There is but one spirit in which these impediments can be met with success. It is the spirit of self-abandonment, the spirit of martyrdom—I must be a fluid sort of man, adapting myself to tastes, opinions, habits, manners, so far as this can be done without hypocrisy or insincerity, or a compromise of principle.<sup>17</sup>

On the following day, after mature deliberation, he tendered his resignation as a member of the Board of Education and accepted the secretaryship. In never-to-be-forgotten words, he writes this intimate record of his life:

Henceforth so long as I hold this office I devote myself to the supremest welfare of mankind upon earth. An inconceivably greater labor is undertaken. With the highest degree of prosperity, results will manifest themselves but slowly. The harvest is far from the seed-time. *Faith* is the only sustainer. I have faith in the improbability of the human race,—in their accelerating improbability. This effort may do, apparently, but little. If we can get this vast wheel into any perceptible motion, we shall have accomplished much. And more and higher qualities than mere labor and perseverance will be requisite. . . . Men can resist the influence of talent; they will deny demonstration, if need be; but few will combat goodness for any length of time. A spirit mildly devoting itself to a good cause is a certain conqueror. Love is a universal solvent. Wilfulness will maintain itself against persecution, torture, death, but will be fused and dissipated by kindness, forbearance, sympathy. Here is a clew given by God to lead us through the labyrinth of the world.<sup>18</sup>

And so it was at the age of forty-one that Horace Mann, in the prime of life, and in spite of enfeebled health, accepted

<sup>17</sup> *Journal*, pages 32 and 33, June 29, 1837.

<sup>18</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Journal*, pages 33-34, June 30, 1837.

a position which required doubled work at half the remuneration which he was receiving. The field of law and politics was forsaken. He could not but look back with satisfaction at a successful legal career in which he had served his clients with fidelity. The many documents preserved among his legal papers <sup>19</sup> show the meticulous care with which he labored. But the humanitarian interest, always so strong, arose to conquer. In breaking the news of his change of occupation to a friend he suggests the surpassing opportunity which was to be his:

I no longer write myself attorney, counsellor, or lawyer. My lawbooks are for sale. My office is "to let." The bar is no longer my forum. My jurisdiction is changed. I have abandoned jurisprudence, and betaken myself to the larger sphere of mind and morals. Having found the present generation composed of materials almost unmalleable, I am about transferring my efforts to the next. Men are cast-iron; but children are wax. Strength expended upon the latter may be effectual, which would make no impression upon the former.<sup>20</sup>

Immediately he divested himself of all connections and offices which might interfere with his newly acquired duties or his influence in the new position. He determined to decline renomination as a candidate to succeed himself in the senate. He resigned as an officer and withdrew from all active connection with the different temperance organizations. Except for voting, he engaged in no political activity, not even attending a party caucus during the twelve years he was secretary. Education to him was the supreme cause, and as such demanded his entire attention and energy. For this policy of neutrality he later gave four reasons: (a) removal

<sup>19</sup> In possession of the Dedham Historical Society, Dedham, Massachusetts.

<sup>20</sup> "Letter, July 2, 1837." *Mann Papers*. Massachusetts Historical Society.

from political strifes and suspicions of partisanship; (b) the heavy duties of the office which precluded engaging in any other supplementary activities; (c) the wish to be known as an educator when he appeared before teachers in their meetings, rather than as a politician; and (d) the desire to avoid setting an example of political activity to his successors in the office.<sup>21</sup>

As rapidly as possible he closed up his legal business. He was impatient to turn to his new interest. After an intense day of occupation with petty routine, he again affirms his conviction of the importance of the new task: "The interests of a client are small, compared with the interests of the next generation. Let the next generation, then, be my client."<sup>22</sup>

He was entering an uncharted path. There were few guides and few books on education. Except for a few feeble attempts there was no educational literature to which he might go for information and inspiration. His task was great, almost superhuman. In the words of the act creating the Board it was the duty of the secretary to

collect information of the actual condition and efficiency of the Common Schools, and other means of popular education; and to diffuse as widely as possible, throughout every part of the Commonwealth, information of the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies, and conducting the education of the young, to the end that all children of the Commonwealth, who depend upon the Common Schools for instruction, may have the best education which those schools can be made to impart.

A year later, by legislative enactment, he was required to attend in each county a meeting of public school teachers,

<sup>21</sup> "Letter to the Electors of the Eighth Congressional District, West Newton, August 28, 1848." Printed Circular, *Mann Papers*. Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>22</sup> *Journal*, November 3, 1837. *Mann Papers*.

members of school committees and friends of education who were to be assembled at such times and places as the Board should determine. During the sessions he was instructed to collect information regarding the condition of the schools, the performance of their duties by school committees; and he was to investigate the situation with respect to teachers, pupils, books, apparatus, and methods of education in the various school districts. This was for the purpose of securing the information which the Board needed in presenting its report to the legislature. The school survey is no new instrument!

He applied himself to his task with his accustomed fidelity and vigor. During the whole time that he was in the office of secretary, he labored at his duties an average of fifteen hours a day. He never took a day off for recreation, and for months at a time he never even took an evening away from his work to call on a friend. He had consecrated himself unreservedly to his mission.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MISSIONARY OF POPULAR EDUCATION

NOT for a moment did Horace Mann doubt that he was facing a Herculean task. Unconcern and apathy were to be expected. What did strike him as "most extraordinary," however, was that every one whom he met limited his inquiries about the position to *salary* rather than to the *honor* of the position. Few, if any, saw the opportunities which were inherent in the office. A few days after accepting the office, on the Fourth of July, he joined with other celebrants of the day to watch the fireworks on the Boston Commons. Returning to his room at the close of the day, his reflections are written in his journal:

The people who speak to me on the subject of my Secretaryship seem to think that there is more dignity or honor or something in being President of the Senate, than to be a Missionary of Popular Education. If the Lord will prosper me for ten years, I will show them what way the balance of honor lies. But this is not a matter to be done sleeping.<sup>1</sup>

A few days later he wrote to his sister in Franklin to tell her of his acceptance of the position, stating the discouragement which he had received, but also expressing his determination to persevere:

Some persons think it not wise to leave my profession, which has hitherto treated me quite as well as I have deserved; others profess to think that my prospects in political life were not to be

<sup>1</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Journal*, Entry, July 4, 1837.



bartered for a post, whose returns for effort and privation must be postponed to another generation; and that my present position in the Senate would be preferable to being a post-rider from county to county looking after the welfare of children, who will never know whence benefits may come, and encountering the jealousy and prejudice and misrepresentation of ignorant parents. But is it not better to do good than to be commended for doing it? <sup>2</sup>

But to this attitude of the public there was one notable exception. Dr. William Ellery Channing <sup>3</sup> wrote words of encouragement and inspiration:

My dear Sir,

I understand that you have given yourself to the cause of education in our Commonwealth. I rejoice in it. Nothing could give me greater pleasure. I have long desired that some one uniting all your qualifications should devote himself to this work. You could not find a nobler station. Government has no nobler one to give. You must allow me to labor under you according to my opportunities. If at any time I can aid you, you must let me know, and I shall be glad to converse with you always about your operations. When will the low, degrading party quarrels of the country cease, and the better minds come to think what can be done toward a substantial, generous improvement of the community? "My ear is pained and my very soul is sick" with the monotonous, yet furious, clamors about currency, banks, etc., when the spiritual interests of the community seem hardly to be recognized as having any reality.

If we can but turn the wonderful energy of this people into the right channel, what a new heaven and earth must be realized among us! And I do not despair. Your willingness to consecrate yourself to the work is a happy omen. You do not stand alone, or form a rare exception to the times. There must be many to be touched by the same truths which are stirring you.

My hope is that the new pursuit will give you new vigor and

<sup>2</sup> MANN, HORACE—Letter to his sister, July 16, 1837. *Mann Papers*.

<sup>3</sup> CHANNING, WILLIAM ELLERY—*Memoirs*, Vol. III, pages 89-90. Boston, 1848.

health. If you can keep strong outwardly, I have no fear about the efficiency of the spirit. I write in haste for I am not very strong, and any effort exhausts me, but I wanted to express my sympathy, and to wish you God speed on your way.

Your sincere friend,

Wm. E. Channing

This letter, written at a time when the Panic of 1837 had burst upon the country, and when men's minds turned to their material affairs, must have stimulated Mann in the task which he was envisioning—one which was to lead to a happier, more elevated life for the whole people.

Keenly aware of his own limitations and of his ignorance of his new work, he very soon planned to read on his subject, withdrawing to the country scenes of his native town, Franklin, for this purpose. To qualify himself for his new duties—duties “large enough to occupy me in ten places at once if that were possible”—he read James Simpson's book entitled, *The Necessity of Popular Education* and Catherine Sedgwick's *Practical Education*. The latter had been writing of American life and her novels had established her as the most popular authoress in the country. She believed that American life must be built on the basis of sobriety, virtue and wholesome family life; she strove to cultivate these attitudes in young and old alike. Here were confirmed and enlarged the views which Mr. Mann had already espoused. Popular education and morality were to be two theme songs, as the new movement gathered momentum.

Writing to an intimate friend in August, just a short time before receiving Dr. Channing's letter, he says:

I have been reading a little on my new mission—(If I could do as I would, I would make it my *evangelism*)—and I am trying to arrange a *row* (now don't pronounce this word wrongly) of thoughts, to make up a sort of inaugural. I expect to visit all the

counties of the State this fall and have got to make a sort of preachment, I suppose, in each. . . .

It appears to me you don't seem to be very much sky-lifted about my appointment. I expected you to ejaculate an anthem at least. You surely know that education is the moral . . . fulcrum, lever and all. . . . If I can but get things well adjusted and then let some heavier man jump on, I am content therewith.<sup>4</sup>

Not daunted, even challenged by the attitude of others, he carried on despite ill-health and other discouragements. On his first day in office he had written: "Every other thing may be overdone, but education cannot be overdone." In this firm conviction he soon afterwards expressed his feeling when a man had spoken to him regretting the insignificance of the office and the haziness of the law on its duties: "If the title is not sufficiently honorable now, then it is clearly left for me to elevate it, and I had rather be creditor than debtor to the title."<sup>5</sup>

Up and down the breadth and length of the State he went, enthusiastically and forcefully presenting the gospel of better schools. *Teach the People* was his slogan. He believed that if the people were reached, they would be moved to action. A direct personal appeal is always more telling, when presented by a master speaker, than the written word. The people had been accustomed to hearing lectures in the popular lyceum movement just now at its flood. The Board of Education immediately after its organization had sent out a circular, inviting the friends of education to hold conventions in their respective counties in the following autumn, and Mr. Mann was requested to attend them to explain to the people what the legislature wished to accomplish by creating the Board and to secure information about the con-

<sup>4</sup> MANN, HORACE—Letter to Elizabeth Peabody, August 4, 1837. *Mann Papers*.

<sup>5</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Journal*, page 38, entry of July 13, 1837.

dition of the schools. In August he sent forth the call announcing the meetings, and invited instructors, school committees, and any others who were interested to attend. Here was his opportunity to suggest improvements which might be made in the schools and "generally to apply a fleshbrush to the back of the public." In the same month he set forth on his circuit which was to last until the middle of November.

The lecture which he had prepared for the occasion was entitled "The Means and Objects of Common School Education." In it he put his finger on the weaknesses of the educational plant in use in the three thousand schools of the Commonwealth:

These schools, at the present time, are so many distinct, independent communities, each being governed by its own habits, traditions, and local customs. There is no common, superintending power over them; there is no bond of brotherhood or family between them. They are strangers and aliens to each other. The teachers are, as it were, embedded, each in his own school district, and they are yet to be excavated and brought together, and to be established, each as a polished pillar of a holy temple. As the system is now administered, if any improvement in principles or modes of teaching is discovered by talent or accident, in one school, instead of being published to the world, it dies with the discoverer.<sup>6</sup>

In it he pleads for "appetizing instruction." "Acquirement and pleasure should go hand in hand." School architecture is found to be bad, and the "diversity and multiplicity" of textbooks is declared to be an evil plight. Schools should secure apparatus to make teaching objective. Libraries were becoming a necessity for schools. Words were taught instead

<sup>6</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Lectures and Annual Reports on Education*, page 47. Boston, 1872.

of things. But, more important, a philosophy of education must be adopted. "Education is to inspire the love of truth as the supremest good. . . ." "A love of truth—a *love of truth*; this is the pool of a moral Bethesda, whose waters have miraculous healing." He makes a stirring plea for the education of all the people:

Education must be universal. It is well, when the wise and the learned discover new truths; but how much better to diffuse the truths already discovered, amongst the multitudes. Every addition to true knowledge is an addition to human power; and while a philosopher is discovering one new truth, millions may be propagated amongst the people. Diffusion, then, rather than discovery, is the duty of government. . . . The whole land must be watered with the streams of knowledge. It is not enough to have, here and there, a beautiful fountain playing in palace gardens; but let it come like the abundant fatness of the clouds upon the thirsting earth.<sup>7</sup>

To one of Mann's experience, accustomed as he was to addressing large audiences, the results were somewhat disconcerting. As might be expected, the success of the meetings varied. At Worcester James G. Carter was elected president of a well-attended convention. At Springfield, too, there was an excellent audience. At Taunton there was a poor meeting, even though Dr. Channing was present and assisted in the convention. On the Cape, with the exception of New Bedford, there were good audiences. In Barnstable the paper gave less than a *square* to notice of the county school meeting, while a whole column was given to the proceedings of a political convention. At Salem "everything dragged and stuck—one of the poorest conventions I have had . . . convention is almost too great a word to apply to so small a number of men." The series closed at Concord, where a

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, pages 83-84.



snowstorm interfered, but where Mann enjoyed the pleasant experience of staying with Ralph Waldo Emerson.

But in spite of difficulties, on the whole Mann was encouraged. Returning to Boston, he entered his estimate of the results of his tour in his journal:

My great circuit is now completed. The point to which, three months ago, I looked forward with so much anxiety, is reached. The labor is done. With much weariness, with almost unbounded anxiety, with some thwartings, but, on the whole, with unexpected and extraordinary encouragement, the work is done. That, however, is but the beginning. I confess life begins to assume a value which I have not felt for five years before.<sup>8</sup>

There were other reasons for encouragement. While he was in the midst of lecturing on his first circuit, Jonathan Phillips authorized him to spend \$500 for school libraries. — Mann writes: "Isn't this the foretaste of a harvest?" Early the next spring an unannounced donor (Edmund Dwight) had promised to contribute \$10,000 to promote the training of teachers, if the legislature would provide an equal sum. A meeting "full of interest and promise" of all the teachers of the primary schools of Boston—all women—was held. Weekly meetings were planned by this group, at which lectures were to be heard and ideas were to be exchanged. On numerous occasions he was invited to speak on his favorite topic.

The next autumn he began his second educational pilgrimage. The importance of the intimate contacts he formed visiting the conventions was keenly felt. As he sets about the preparation of the second lecture, he reflects: "This is a labor of incalculable importance. On the acceptability of my address will in no inconsiderable degree depend the success

<sup>8</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Journal*, page 61, entry October 15, 1837. *Mann Papers*.

of the cause. I can do nothing alone. No one can do anything alone. Others will act with me according as they are pleased with me." He chose for his subject "Special Preparation as a Prerequisite to Teaching." The public was showing greater interest, although Mann himself, true to his nature, often despaired. He was harassed by poor health, and his successes in securing public response were so meager when measured in terms of his ideals.

Early in September the first meeting was held in Hanover. Here there was good help and an auspicious start was made. Robert Rantoul, Jr., member of the Board, spoke on the subject of normal schools. Ex-President John Quincy Adams spoke admirably. At the close of the day, Mann records: "It was, indeed, a great day for the cause of common schools." At Springfield there was a "miserable meeting." At Pittsfield the attendance was small, but two or three, including Catherine Sedgwick, were important aides. At Worcester, a "little dent" was made. In Essex County there was a very small convention. At the close of this second circuit, his reflections were summarized in the journal:

When I undertook the arduous labour of effecting improvements in our common school system, up to a reasonable and practicable degree, I did so with a full conviction that it would require twenty or twenty-five years of the continued exertions of some one, accompanied with good fortune, to accomplish the work; and I think I took hold of it with a cordiality and resolution which would not be worn out in less than a quarter of a century. I am now of the opinion that one-twentieth part of the work has been done.<sup>9</sup>

In 1838 the legislature had passed a law, making it incumbent upon the secretary to attend a convention provided for in each of the counties of the state, a duty before

<sup>9</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Journal*, entry of October 10, 1838. *Mann Papers*.

performed at the request of the Board. It remained in effect until its repeal in 1842. For each year's tour he prepared a special lecture. The last three were on the following subjects: "The Necessity of Education in a Republican Government," "What God Does and What He Leaves for Man to Do, in the Work of Education," and "An Historical View of Education: Showing its Dignity and its Degradation." During these five years Mr. Mann attended every convention, one in each county annually, two in the larger counties.

The entries made in his journal during the last three years tell a story similar to that recorded of his earlier journeys: "To make an impression in Berkshire in regard to schools is like attempting to batter down Gibraltar with one's fist. . . . My health fails. I may perish in the cause; but I will not abandon it, and will only increase my efforts as it needs them more." At Greenfield he writes: "I have hold of so large a mountain, there is much danger that I shall break my own back in trying to lift it. . . . I wish the county of Franklin could have the spirit of Franklin." Nantucket was a bright spot. Were others to be as alert in the cause "there would soon be a common-school revolution in the state." "Barnstable does not seem to have felt any *tingle*," and the convention was as miserable "as can well be conceived." In Plymouth a large house was well filled and Mann was convinced that here "the cause is getting along." He was disappointed in Dedham, his home for some years. The convention was a "meagre, spiritless, discouraging affair."

It discouraged Mann to think that, although he had always drawn large crowds as a political speaker, he could not do so when making an address on the subject of education. When he held a convention in Franklin County, almost all the principal men deserted it and went to Deerfield to attend a political meeting. Satirically he suggested that, in several

counties of the state, the law should be changed so that mobs and riots should be quelled and the rioters put to flight by the announcement of an address on the common schools, this being a more effective procedure than to call out the sheriff and a posse. In pessimistic mood he complains that "every mountebank and hand-organist and monkey-shower and military company" ran away with his audience, that he had to give way to "every puppet exhibition or hurdy-gurdy mendicant." Especially in 1840, the presidential election year, he encountered the "wild roar of party politics." Political excitement ran high. "Politics have absorbed everything else, and the idea of effecting political reforms by reforming the source whence all evils proceed, seems not to have entered the minds of the people."

Not only did Mr. Mann lecture before the school conventions, but he was in demand as a speaker elsewhere. Especially did he make himself felt in his public addresses before the lyceums and before societies which had as their object the advancement of knowledge. His lecture on "School Punishments"<sup>10</sup> was given before the primary teachers of the City of Boston. The lecture on "District School Libraries"<sup>11</sup> given at teachers' associations and lyceums served as a means of arousing interest in the cause. The two, together with the annual lectures given before the county school conventions, were issued as a volume in the *Common School Library* series in 1845, with the sanction of the Board of Education.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Lectures and Reports on Education*, pages 333-368. Boston, 1872.

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*, pages 297-332.

<sup>12</sup> By this means they were given wide distribution. Mann refused to profit financially from their publication, and as the royalties came due each year, he advised with the Board of Education to determine the best use which could be made of the money accruing from sales.

His personal contacts were without doubt one of the most potent means of reaching the public. Meeting the most influential citizens in every corner of the State, he could influence them by the force of his personality as well as by the weight of his arguments.

A momentous task of supreme importance was the preparation and issuing of the *Abstract of School Returns*. For a decade preceding the establishment of the Board of Education, the secretary of the Commonwealth had been required to prepare a small pamphlet of about a dozen pages which presented statistical data regarding the schools. Now the secretary of the Board of Education was requested to prepare the report. Immediately following his return from his first educational tour he plunged into the task. Within a few months the document of more than three hundred pages, containing interpretations as well as statistics, was completed. To secure the information needed, a circular letter had been addressed to the school committee of every town. The law of 1838 required the town committees to give annually a "detailed report" of the condition of the schools of the town, together with such statements and suggestions as they thought would promote the interests of the schools under their supervision. This law Mann considered one which would create "an epoch in the history of education" in Massachusetts. He wisely believed that school committeemen, knowing that a report had to be made at the close of the year, would observe more closely and would reflect upon what they saw. He also saw clarity of thought on school subjects as a result of writing itself.

These committees were the dynamos of the whole school machine. As there was no other supervisory authority, this body of three men, or a multiple of three, acted in this capacity. The district system was battling to remain free



from being merged into a town system. For twelve years, because of his official position and influence, Mann was to all intents and purposes superintendent of schools for every town and city in the state.

The "detailed reports" which the committeemen submitted were invaluable. These men, taken as a body, were the most intelligent on the subject of education in the state. Let the secretary describe the documents in his own words:

Generally speaking, the reports are remarkably clear, judicious, business-like documents;—to all appearance prepared by men, anxious only for the discovery of truth and impartial in their awards of praise and blame; they are at once conciliatory to the people, yet just to the great cause they espouse or advocate. In very few of them, is there a forgetfulness of the subject in hand, for the ostentation of literary display. . . . On many very important and interesting points, the views presented are so judicious and full as to leave very little, if any thing, further to be said. On such subjects as the expediency of forming union schools, from two or more contiguous school districts, wherever localities will permit; the separation of the larger and smaller scholars into two schools, and placing the latter under the care of female teachers, with the advantages to the old and the young of such an arrangement; the location, construction, and condition of school-houses; the necessity of concert and cooperation between prudential and superintending committees; the importance of higher qualifications in school teachers, and the extent of the sacrifice of the dearest and most enduring interests of society, resulting from present deficiencies; the deplorable amount of absence from schools—now for the time brought to light by the practice of keeping registers in schools,—together with the tardiness or want of punctuality in those who do attend; the prevailing embarrassments and hindrances consequent both from a deficiency and a diversity of school books; the common proneness in pupils to neglect the rudiments of knowledge, through a childish ambition to engage in studies, which, because they are called *higher*, are absurdly supposed to be more important; the advantages of school

apparatus and district school libraries; and the necessity, growing out of the very constitution of human nature—and therefore of everlasting duration—of combining moral with intellectual instruction. On these, and perhaps a few other topics, if the views contained in these reports could be adopted, realized, acted upon, but little room for amendment would be left. Could all the excellent practical suggestions, which are here made, be followed, and the evils here designated, be abolished, we should have something approaching very near to a system of Common School education.<sup>13</sup>

But more important still is the elevated place given in the thinking of the most enlightened men of the state to the public school as an instrument of the state:

Through these reports, the great mass of the people present themselves before the Legislature and the public, and ask to be heard in reference to the only means of Public Instruction, which their sons and daughters will ever enjoy. . . . Under the influence of parental regard for their own offspring, and of Christian feeling towards those of their neighbors and townsmen, they have declared, how precious, how indispensable to the realization of their best hopes, to the removal of their worst fears, is this institution of the public schools; and with all earnestness, they have called for a greater liberality in their endowments, for the rejection of all selfish and sinister motives in their administration, and for a more ample share of public favor and liberality. Notwithstanding the low condition into which the whole system has fallen, no man can read these reports, without perceiving how firmly the value of that system is rooted in the convictions, and how deeply it holds the affections of the most thoughtful and reflecting men amongst us.<sup>14</sup>

A detailed perusal of the reports shows effectively the situation in the schools. Let the committee men speak for themselves. "At least one-quarter of the money raised for

<sup>13</sup> *Abstract of Massachusetts School Returns, 1838-1839*. Introduction, pages VI-VII.

<sup>14</sup> *Op. Cit.* Introduction, page VIII.

supporting common schools in this town is virtually thrown away." "In some instances, the scholar has been absent one half of the number of days of the school or quarter." Outside amusements, they said, hindered the schools. Parents should visit more often than they do to ascertain the progress of the pupils. School libraries were needed. But oftener than any other item, the poor quality of the schoolhouse is mentioned. "Too small in size," "too near the highway," "no playground," are descriptions. "Some are located on the highest point of land, exposed to the winter blasts; others on low ground, where children must wade in water or in mire." "Almost anything for a schoolroom. Farmers do not think of shutting up their calves, or their lambs, in a hencoop or a pigsty. These must have good shelter, or space enough. But their children may be crowded together well nigh like negroes on a slave ship, and generally upon seats far elevated from the floor. . . ." "It is absolutely a wonder, that every child in ordinary school six months in a year, in the ordinary country schoolhouse, does not die of consumption before ten years of age." At least the committees were coming to realize the inadequacies of the school and were aroused to act to remedy the situation. In the reports were not the generalizations of a visitor, but the testimony of hundreds of eyewitnesses, neighbors, respected citizens of the community.

It was an immense task to assemble and interpret the reports submitted. "An appalling undertaking," Mann calls it, and "were it not for its utility which I see more plainly than ever seed sower saw the future harvest, its very aspect would repel me from attempting to perform it." By persuasion and legal pressure he increased the number submitted from one hundred and seventy with two thousand pages in his first year in office to three hundred and thirty (practically all districts) with six thousand pages a decade later (1846)

when seventy-one of the towns printed the reports. With painstaking care he summarized his findings from the reports and sent them forth as ambassadors of better schools.

The town report was itself either read at an annual town meeting or printed. The lively discussion which usually arose built public sentiment. It was required that a copy be sent to the Secretary of the Commonwealth. After they were secured from him and examined by the secretary of the Board, they were published with whatever selections from the comments he desired to make. The completed *Abstract of School Returns* was sent to each legislator and to every town clerk of each town. Duplicates were sent to the school committee of every town, and where the town was very large, triplicates. Wide discussion could not fail to arouse public sentiment and have its effect upon the members of the legislature.

How important Mr. Mann considered the compiled abstract in his program of educating the people of the state to a regard for their schools is seen when he says in transmitting one of them to the legislature in 1840: "I believe it will be found the most interesting and useful document, ever presented to the people of this Commonwealth, on the subject of education." The following summer, when commenting on the labor involved in preparing the *Abstract*, "a year's work to be crowded into three months," he expresses his confidence in their value: "Every one of these will raise a wave of feeling in favor of the cause of education, which will not subside till the end of time."

Nor was he alone in his belief in the importance of the documents. His good friend, George B. Emerson, wrote: "Those volumes of the school returns are the most remarkable volumes upon the subject of the schools ever published. One feels proud of our glorious old Commonwealth, on reading them; proud that there are men in almost every one of

its three hundred towns, capable of feeling truth so deeply, and of uttering it so boldly, and so powerfully . . . his (the secretary's) opinions are reaffirmed, in the fullest and most striking manner."<sup>15</sup>

In the second year of his secretaryship, Mann began the publication of *The Common School Journal*. In its first annual report the Board had approved the publication of "a periodical journal or paper, of which the exclusive object should be to promote the cause of education, especially of common-school education." Soon thereafter (April 18, 1838), Mr. Mann wrote to Governor Everett suggesting that, as secretary, he would be glad to undertake such a publication. He felt the limitations which any traveling agent or secretary had in collecting and diffusing the information necessary to improve the schools. "The cause demands the aid of a press and the present press, with a few praiseworthy exceptions, seems to have little sympathy with it," he declared. Many more persons could be reached by print than by personal contact. In November the new venture was launched. Mr. Mann took complete responsibility, the Board having no official connection with it. However, on the other hand, the Board expressed the opinion that it would be a valuable undertaking, helpful in the cause. Contrary to a prevailing general impression, this was not the first educational journal to see the light of day. The *Connecticut Common School Journal* had begun its career in August, 1838. *The Common School Director*, edited by Samuel Lewis, Commissioner of Schools for Ohio, had been authorized by the legislature and was first issued in May, 1838. But both were short-lived, and consequently of relatively limited influence.

<sup>15</sup> *Observations on a Pamphlet Entitled "Remarks on the Seventh Annual Report of the Hon. Horace Mann, Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education,"* page 4. Boston, 1844.



*The Common School Journal* was published twice each month in octave size, sixteen pages to an issue. To attain wide circulation the subscription price was set at the low price of one dollar a year. Each annual volume contained almost four hundred pages of vital information about the schools. Mr. Mann assumed the editorship in addition to his other numerous and exacting duties. For ten years he was to carry on this work, after which he transferred it to other hands by whom it was continued for an additional two years.

Just after the first number came from the press, Mann's private journal records:

With this I hope to awaken some attention to the great subject I have in mind. It must be made an efficient auxiliary, if possible. I know it will involve great labor; but the results at the end, not the labor at the beginning, are the things to be regarded.<sup>16</sup>

It was nonpolitical and nonpartisan, except in its partisanship for good schools. It went forth "not to answer an expressed want, but in the hope of making the greatest of all popular wants known and heeded."<sup>17</sup> It came to the public, rather as their fate, than as a consequence of their free will. It was born, not because it was *wanted*, but because it was needed."<sup>18</sup> Its purpose and sphere was set forth in the prospectus printed as an introduction to the first volume:

The great object of the work will be the improvement of common schools, and other means of popular education. It is also intended to make it a depositary of the Laws of the Commonwealth in relation to Schools, and of the Reports, Proceedings, etc., of the Massachusetts Board of Education. As the documents of that

<sup>16</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Journal*, entry of November 17, 1838. *Mann Papers*.

<sup>17</sup> *The Common School Journal*, Vol. III, Introduction, No. 1, Jan. 1, 1841.

<sup>18</sup> *The Common School Journal*, Vol. X, 1848, page 383.

Board will have a general interest, they ought to be widely diffused, and permanently preserved. . . .

The paper will explain, and, as far as possible, enforce upon parents, guardians, teachers, and school officers, their respective duties towards the rising generation. . . .

It will not be so much the object of the work to discover, as to diffuse knowledge. In this age and country, the difficulty is not so much that few things on the subject of education are known, as it is that but few persons know them.<sup>19</sup>

How well the aims were accomplished is well stated ten years later in the last volume which Mr. Mann edited, in an open editorial reviewing the unique contribution which was made through its pages:

Taking a brief retrospect, we may say, that the previous volumes of the *Journal* contain every law of the State, with a complete digest of those laws, and the decisions of civil courts interpreting all their leading provisions; they contain, in full, all the *Reports* of the Board of Education, since its establishment; a history of the origin, progress and success of the Normal Schools; model plans for schoolhouses, with directions, specific and detailed, as to the best methods of constructing, seating, furnishing, warming and ventilating them; copies of school registers and of committee returns, by which the statistics of the schools are obtained,—a system believed to be more extensive and exact than exists in any other part of the world;—essays and extracts from the ablest educators and educationists, on the subject of school order and discipline, and on the best methods of teaching each one of the common school branches; articles original and selected, of a moral, literary and scientific character; with passing accounts or notices, of the condition in other States of our own country, and in other parts of the world.

It is this comprehensiveness in the plan and scope of the *Journal* which has given it one of its distinctive features. There is no other educational periodical in this country, or, so far as we know, in the world, which has proposed to itself the same end.

<sup>19</sup> *The Common School Journal*, November, 1838, Vol. I, no. 1, page 1.

Coupled with the well-deserved celebrity of the Massachusetts school system, it causes the *Journal* to be sought after by almost every state, city, or community of any size.<sup>20</sup>

Its message was not confined to Massachusetts. The State of Rhode Island placed a complete file of its volumes in each town library. Similarly the State of New York sent it to all of its school districts, and the local superintendents of schools were requested to have them bound and placed in their school libraries. A large part of the subscription list consisted of teachers in private schools or of clergymen, who, as members of the school committees, were active in the educational affairs. Too few copies reached the teachers of the common schools themselves. For ten years it was the main current source of information about the schools.

A fourth means by which Mr. Mann sought to influence the development of the schools was by current correspondence. This was always large. Even after he had been sent to Washington as a member of Congress, he wrote, on the average, thirty letters a day, all in long hand.

Numerous pamphlets helped to swell the volume of his writings. Thousands of copies of bound and unbound occasional documents were distributed. Many of them were controversial, adding interest to their contents and volume to their sales. Some were patriotic, such as his address before the authorities of the city of Boston. All bore either directly or indirectly upon his favorite theme—that of education.

Experienced in the ways of a legislature and in the techniques of lawmaking, Mr. Mann gave his support to necessary legislation by personal contact with members of the two houses of the lawmaking body of the Commonwealth.

By far the most important documents he produced during

<sup>20</sup> *The Common School Journal*, Vol. X, January 1, 1848, pages 2-3.

his secretaryship were the twelve annual reports to the Board of Education one of which came from his pen at the beginning of each session of the legislature. Transmitted to the legislature through the Board of Education, they were the basis of many fruitful reforms. Into them he poured his best thought; they have become influential educational classics. In their pages can be found the essence of his educational ideas and a summary of his educational philosophy.

Henry Barnard, eminent contemporary in educational reform, generously writes of them: "These reports and lectures deal in a masterly fashion with topics of universal and permanent interest, and not only mark, but make, an era in our educational writing and literature. They should find a place in every public and private library."<sup>21</sup> A group of petitioners, in asking the legislature to have the reports reprinted, pays high tribute to their importance as a factor in the educational revival: "These writings exerted a more decided influence everywhere throughout the free States and Canada, opening the eyes of men to their wants and to the vast individual and national importance of improved systems of education, than any other cause which has been or is in operation."<sup>22</sup> George B. Emerson, writing in 1844, soon after the appearance of the seventh report called attention to the wide distribution which was given them:

They have already reached far beyond the limits of our narrow State. They are echoing in the woods of Maine and along the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes. They are heard throughout New York and throughout all the West, and the Southwest. A conviction of their importance has sent a Massachusetts man to take charge of the schools of New Orleans; they are at this moment

<sup>21</sup> House Bill No. 207, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, March, 1867.

<sup>22</sup> *Op. Cit.* Among those signing the petition were Charles Sumner, Henry Wilson, Nathaniel P. Banks, George B. Emerson, John A. Andrews, Benjamin F. Butler, and Josiah Quincy.

regenerating these of Rhode Island. In the remotest corner of Ohio forty men, not children and women but *men*, meet together to read aloud a single copy of the Secretary's reports which one of them receives; thousands of the best friends of humanity of all the sects, parties, and creeds in every state of the Union are familiar with the name of Horace Mann.<sup>23</sup>

His successor in the editorship of *The Common School Journal* comments: "It would be difficult in the whole range of science and philanthropy to point to another such succession of powerful appeals, fitted as these were to the wants of the community, and rising as they did with every year. . . . These papers are the best history of our school system. . . ." <sup>24</sup> Eighteen thousand copies of one of them were printed and distributed by the State of New York. England issued one at public expense and the British Parliament asked him to amplify the section of his seventh report which referred to the schools of Great Britain and then printed and distributed it as a public document. Sarmiento, minister to the United States from the Argentine Republic, was authorized by his government to secure copies for distribution in his country.

Given at the close of the calendar year, each report contained a brief synopsis of the *Abstract of School Returns* and commented upon the major educational problems and projects of the year. After this synopsis, by far the greater part of the report was given to a comprehensive discussion of some one topic, such as School Motives or European Schools. Every school district in the state received a copy which served as the basis for discussion and consequent

<sup>23</sup> EMERSON, GEORGE B.—*Observation on a Pamphlet, Entitled "Remarks on the Seventh Annual Report of the Hon. Horace Mann, Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education,"* page 15. Boston, 1844.

<sup>24</sup> FOWLE, WILLIAM B.—*The Common School Journal*, Vol. XI. pages 122-124. 1849.



action in improving the schools. Thousands of school reports have been written since his day, most of them to find their way into the furnace; but these still have about them the breath of life, the vision, the sagacious insight into the very heart of the educational problem and are valued as when they were first issued. They are "like the twelve stones which the people of God took out of the channel of Jordan, and set up in Gilgal as a memorial of progress toward the promised land; but, unlike those dumb memorials, in *one* respect, for when the children shall ask their fathers, in time to come, saying, 'What mean these stones?' these memorials will speak for themselves." <sup>25</sup> In office only six months, Mann issued his first annual report (1837). Quoting the act of the legislature enjoining upon the secretary the duty of collecting and diffusing information concerning the schools, he describes his efforts to do so during this brief period by his activities in addressing school conventions, writing a circular letter to school committeemen, personal examination of eight hundred school buildings, and contacts with legislators whom he had known during the decade he was in the house and senate. In this as in succeeding reports, he marshaled summarized statistics about the schools, and urged such vital matters as school attendance, increased salaries for teachers, school libraries, and teacher-training institutions. While each report gave attention to immediate school problems as they developed and continued from year to year, each also had set forth a single subject of large import for consideration. He at once states his guiding philosophy of education: "The object of the common-school system of Massachusetts was to give to every child in the Commonwealth a free, straight, solid pathway, by which he could walk directly up from the

<sup>25</sup> FOWLE, W. B.—Editorial, *The Common School Journal*, Vol. XI, pages 122-124. April 15, 1849.

ignorance of an infant to a knowledge of the primary duties of a man." Four cardinal topics are objects of consideration in the report. First is the "situation, construction, condition, and number of schoolhouses." The character and duties of school committeemen are next discussed in detail. The "multiplicity and diversity" of schoolbooks used in the schools retard efficient instruction. A famous American educator stated his conviction that this section "contains the best statement ever made of the duties of school committees, especially in the selection of teachers."<sup>26</sup> His third topic is the apathy shown by the citizens of the state towards the common schools, in spite of the fact that five sixths of the children of Massachusetts are entirely dependent upon them for instruction. Fourth, he discusses the problem of securing competent teachers. These four topics in fact cover the whole range of school affairs: the physical plant, administration, public support, and competent instruction.

A supplementary report was written on the subject of schoolhouses. A few days after submitting the main body of his first report to the Board of Education, an entry is made in his journal: "I go to my schoolhouse report, which I hope [is] to be beautiful-schoolhouse seed; or seed out of which beautiful schoolhouses will grow, a whole crop of them."<sup>27</sup> Less than three months later it was completed. Six thousand copies were scattered throughout the state. In a pamphlet of sixty-four pages it is clearly shown how improvements may be made in ventilation and warming, size, proper seating, lighting, windows, yards, and location. Drawings showing plans for schoolrooms are included in an appendix.

<sup>26</sup> HARRIS, WILLIAM T.—*Educational Review*, Vol. XII, pages 110-114, September, 1896.

<sup>27</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Journal*, page 70, entry of January 9, 1838.

The special object of concern in the second annual report (1838) is the subject of reading. He advocates the word method as against the letter, or a-b-c, method of teaching. Truthfully, but less tactfully than in the first report, he asserts that "the common-school system of Massachusetts had fallen into a state of general unsoundness and debility"; that the schools were "under a sleepy supervision"; that teachers lacked "knowledge of the human mind as the subject of improvement." Offense was given to many by these severe criticisms, and bitterness rankled in the hearts of not a few teachers, a bitterness which was later to break out into open hostility.

The third annual report (1839) shifts attention away from the schools to the parents and patrons. Common schools are *means*, not *ends*. They are dependent for their success upon public sentiment, not upon compulsion. The chief topic for detailed analysis is the school library. The secretary makes a powerful plea for a library for each district of the state. He deplores the usual war-exalting, traditional school history of the day and finds that reading novels, "bubble-literature," both wastes time and is harmful.

The fourth report (1840) sets forth the evils of the district school system. Forcefully he recalls a section of a road a mile and a half in length which had six district schools as a striking example of the harm which results from a large number of relatively small schools. He urges the importance of union schools for the sake of grading and classifying pupils and for decreasing the cost of operation. He recommends a consolidation of two districts where union schools are impracticable. In the report is found the germ of the idea of centralized schools, now enjoying such wide acceptance in America. He reiterates the necessity of parental influence in

the schools, if they are to function at their best. Quoting M. Victor Cousin's aphorism, "As is the teacher, so is the school," he states that this may well be true in a centralized system such as France has; but that in America, where all power resides in the people, it is truer to say, "As is the parent, so are both the teacher and the school."

The fifth report (1841) was the first to create world-wide interest. It was written to "show the effect of education upon the worldly fortunes and estates of men—its influence upon poverty, upon human comfort and competence, upon the outward, visible, material interest or well-being of individuals and communities." This was the report which had been printed and distributed at public expense in New York, England, and Germany. Mr. Mann recognized that the argument for material well-being is the lowest which can be made in behalf of education, yet he was convinced that it would reach many who could not be convinced on a higher and more idealistic plane. He considered education a greater producer of wealth than all natural resources, mineral or agricultural, and a greater asset than favorable climate. He addressed an inquiry to a number of competent leading business men asking their opinions. The replies confirmed his own view and overwhelmingly showed that faith in the educational process was held by manufacturers and large employers of labor. Those who were better educated were judged to have greater productive capacity. Guarding against glorifying the material at the expense of the higher qualities, he says:

However deserving of attention may be the economical view of the subject, yet it is one that dwindles into insignificance when compared with these loftier and more sacred attributes of the cause which have the power of converting material wealth into spiritual well-being, and of giving to its possessor lordship and

sovereignty alike over the temptations of adversity, and the still more dangerous seducements of prosperity, and which—so far as human agency is concerned—must be looked to for the establishment of peace and righteousness upon earth, and for the enjoyment of glory and happiness in heaven.

In the sixth report (1842) he dealt primarily with the subject of teaching health and physiology. A *Dissertation on the Study of Physiology in Schools*, it is called. It was his belief that physiology should have chief place among the studies above the elementary school level. With his usual earnestness and intensity, displayed in causes which interested him, Mr. Mann championed a subject closely related to phrenology, to which he was converted by George Combe who had visited America a few years earlier. Nearly an invalid for much of his life, he was early impressed with the importance of physical vigor. The report was certainly a strategic mistake. Mr. Mann had already been thought of as a “crank” on certain subjects, and this report confirmed the suspicions of his enemies. For six years a smoldering flame of resentment towards him had been smothered by the high quality of his work as secretary, and by the elevated character of his writings. Now the cherished wrath suddenly burst forth. Mr. Mann welcomed a trip to Europe, for which his marriage furnished the excuse, to allow the storm to quiet down. This report set the stage for the open warfare which was waged by the “thirty-one Boston masters,” when they felt themselves further aggrieved by the implication of incompetency which was made in the seventh report.

His seventh annual report (1843), written upon his return from a six months’ sojourn in Europe, records his observations of European schools. “The examination of schools, schoolhouses, school systems, apparatus, and modes of teaching has been my first object, at all times and places.” In his



travels he visited England, Ireland and Scotland; crossed the ocean to Hamburg and Magdeburg; then proceeded to Berlin, Potsdam, Halle, and Weissenfels. In Saxony, he went to Leipsic and Dresden, the two greatest cities of the kingdom. Thence he went to Erfurt, Weimar, Eisenach, Frankfort, Nassau, Hesse, Darmstadt, and Baden. Finally, after visiting all the principal cities of the Rhenish provinces of Prussia, he passed through Holland and Belgium to Paris. He inspected, not only typical elementary and secondary schools, but prisons and hospitals for the insane, the sick, and the feeble-minded. He presents the evils of a "partial system," in which the majority of the people have no educational opportunities, these being reserved for the socially and financially elect. He observed schoolhouses, apparatus, methods of teaching, modes of punishment, teachers, and institutions in which teachers were prepared. All was set forth in a volume containing almost two hundred pages. An impartial reader of the document is impressed with Mr. Mann's intention to be fair and to record what he had observed accurately. While there are criticisms of American schools, defects are also found in those abroad. Mr. Mann was deeply impressed with the teaching skill which the teachers in German schools exhibited, and contrasted it with that in Massachusetts. This infuriated the Boston schoolmasters who saw him reflecting on their own teaching. The tinder box of resentment was set off, and a caustic and bitter exchange of argument was to ensue with those who felt themselves so severely aggrieved. The violent thunder of debate which was aroused, however, must be recounted in a later chapter.

The eighth report (1844), briefer and more routine in character than the others, expresses satisfaction with the improved reports which are secured from local school com-

mitteemen. Mr. Mann is pleased, too, that women are being employed more generally as teachers. He describes a plan to be followed in conducting teachers' institutes. He sees more extended use of the Bible as one of the books for use in schools. He lauds the value of vocal music. He had long been interested in the work done by Lowell Mason, and gave him constant encouragement and support, both in Boston and the rest of the state, in his struggle to exalt music as a subject of instruction. He views a decrease in emphasis upon emulation as a stimulus to study with satisfaction.

The ninth annual report (1845) is one of his best efforts. In it he approaches the fundamental question of school motives and school vices. It is a discussion which modern teachers would do well to read. He shows that obedience ought to be secured by affection and respect rather than by fear. He is concerned with moral instruction in the schools. He again dwells at length on his favorite theme of nonemulation. He treats of such immediately practical questions as truancy and whispering. He urges the importance of thinking and investigation as against mere memorizing. He explains the Pestalozzian method of teaching and commends the inductive method.

In the tenth annual report (1846) he traces the history of the Massachusetts school system. He considers this the "first account, at once methodical, succinct, and adapted to popular comprehension, of any school system of any state or nation, which was prepared within the state or nation itself, by a person familiar with its design, its structure, and its practical operation." Others had been prepared by visitors. The relation between education and the future welfare of the state is shown. The report emphasizes the idea of a *free and universal education for the people*, brought by the

Pilgrim Fathers to America. To recognize their duties to posterity they built the school. He declares that: "As an innovation upon all pre-existing policy and usages, the establishment of free schools was the boldest ever promulgated since the commencement of the Christian era." With the exception of New England and a few small states elsewhere, he does not find any country, anywhere, which maintains a free system of schools for its people. This, he finds, is due to false notions of property rights. He concludes by propounding three propositions upon which a democratic school system must rest: (a) "The successive generations of men taken collectively constitute one great commonwealth." (b) "The property of this commonwealth is pledged for the education of all its youth up to such a point as will save them from poverty and vice, and prepare them for the adequate performance of their social and civic duties." (c) "The successive holders of this property are trustees bound to the faithful execution of their trust by the most sacred obligations, and embezzlement and pillage from children and descendants have not less of criminality, and have more of meanness, than the same offenses when perpetrated against contemporaries." In the *Edinburgh Review* the volume is described as "a noble monument of a civilized people." "If America were sunk beneath the waves," it is declared, "this would remain the fairest picture on record of an ideal commonwealth."

The eleventh annual report (1847) returns to a discussion of moral education. Following the method of the fifth report, a letter was addressed to a group of famous educators, chosen for their capacity and experience in dealing with the problem, asking their opinion of the effect of a common school education conducted on the principles espoused by Massachusetts upon social and moral character. Although

all were believers in a creed in which the depravity of the human heart was a fundamental tenet,<sup>28</sup> all agreed with Mr. Mann's thesis that moral improvement may be secured and vice and crime driven out by education.

The twelfth and last annual report (1848) is in many respects the crowning effort of Mann's career as secretary. This is his valedictory to the Board of Education, the public, the teachers, and the public schools. His all-encompassing title is: *The Capacities of our Present School System to Improve the Pecuniary Condition and to Elevate the Intellectual and Moral Character of the Commonwealth*. It is at once both a defense and a summary of previous reports. In his work as secretary he had two choices before him: one, to treat the schools as perfect, praising where praise was not due; the other, to reveal shortcomings in the light of his elevated ideals, and to seek improvements in accordance with the lofty conception which he had of the place of education in society. As was his wont, Mr. Mann chose the path of duty, sacrificing immediate and superficial popularity. In this, his last report, he traces anew the service of the schools in improving the financial, intellectual, moral, and religious condition of the state. He asserts the importance of the Bible and of religion. He re-emphasizes the importance of health and the necessity of providing physical training in the schools. He repeats his belief in the validity of democratic procedures, of government by consent rather than of force: "The education of the whole people in a republican government can never be attained without the consent of the whole people. Compulsion, even if it were desirable, is not an

<sup>28</sup> The questionnaire was sent to the following, who were all members of orthodox churches: John Griscom, New Jersey; David P. Page, New York; Solomon Adams, Massachusetts; Jacob Abbott, New York; F. A. Adams, New Jersey; E. A. Andrews, Connecticut; R. S. Howard, Esq., Vermont; and Catherine E. Beecher, Vermont.

available instrument. Enlightenment, not coercion, is our resource. . . . We cannot drive our people up a dark avenue, even though it be the right one; but we must hang the starry lights of knowledge about it, and show them not only the directness of its course to the goal of prosperity and honor, but the beauty of the way that leads to it."

The report was received with acclaim. Charles Sumner wrote: "I have read your report with profound interest and with entire assent. It stirs the blood like a trumpet." George Combe, his dear friend, wrote from Edinburgh, Scotland: "I am astonished at your *Twelfth Annual Report*! How did you find time and brains to prepare it? You are a perfect Hercules in mental strength. How I long to see it disseminated over the world."

The reports, taken as a whole, are still one of the best sources we have, if we wish to read on the fundamental principles which underlie universal public education. There is not a fundamental concept in our doctrine which is not found in these reports at least in embryonic form. They will repay repeated reading by any one who wishes to become acquainted with the essential philosophy basic to democracy and democratic education.



## CHAPTER IX

### BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS

**I**N the preceding chapter we have traced the principal channels through which Mr. Mann carried forth his educational crusade. We must now return to his early years as secretary.

When Mr. Mann accepted the position, he was still living in his law office. After restricting himself financially in every possible way, even to the extent of going without dinners and taking care of his bed with his own hands, he was just completing the last payments on the five or six thousand dollar debt which he had assumed for his brother. He had suffered from hunger and exhaustion, he was grossly overworked, and above all, he felt lonely and friendless.

His poignant grief over the death of his wife still overwhelmed him. Reference after reference regarding her is to be found in his journal and in his letters to intimates. She was continually in his thoughts. Some years later he wrote: "Time has carried me forward but little since that hour. It was, as it has always seemed to me, like an end of my life on earth and left nothing to be changed." This allusion to her death, sacredly written in his journal, records the depth of his feeling and the severity of his affliction.

Only recently his father-in-law and friend, Dr. Messer, had passed into the great beyond. Just a few months before he assumed office, he had buried his mother. Still feeling the pangs of separation from his wife, and now having his heart-strings torn anew by the death of his mother, he writes sadly:

"A memory full of proofs of the purest, strongest, wisest love is all that is left to me upon earth of a mother. . . . It is now years since I have felt as though I were on the isthmus between time and eternity. I have long ago left the earth, but have not yet entered the world beyond it. Standing in this solitude between worlds, my mother has passed by me; and how much the balance of the universe has changed! What weight of treasure is added to the scale of the future! A wife and a mother; and such a wife! In that heavenly world I cannot conceive of her lips as glowing with any diviner smile, nor her forehead as starred with a more glorious beauty. And such a mother! Were she now to return to earth, how more devotedly than she has done could she toil for the welfare of her children? I go tomorrow morning to perform the last rites, and probably I am to have a day, the like of which will never come to me again."<sup>1</sup>

To add to his despair his health was at low ebb. He had inherited weak lungs from his father and during the ages twenty to thirty was always in danger of contracting tuberculosis. At the beginning of his second college year he had had a breakdown from which he had never fully recovered. He writes years later, referring to his handicap: "For the last twenty-five years, so far as it regards my health, I have been put, from day to day, on my good behavior; and during the whole of this period, as an Hibernian would say, if I had lived as other folks do for a month, I should have died in a fortnight. . . . I am certain I could have performed twice the labor, both better and with greater ease to myself, had I known as much of the laws of health and life at twenty-one as I do now."<sup>2</sup>

Just a few weeks before he assumed the secretaryship he recorded in his journal: "How much my sufferings and my physical privations from extreme poverty have impaired my

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Mary Peabody (later his second wife), March 20, 1837. *Mann Papers*.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to young lawyer of Dansville, New York, July 23, 1852. Clipping in notebooks of Benjamin Pickman Mann, Antioch College.

health. And with my health have departed my spirits, all mental elasticity and saliency, and the power of concentration and prolonged effort." For two months he was so ill that even his best friends despaired of his recovery. Only ten days before taking office, he wrote despairingly: "Ah! Sleep I can rarely woo; 'balmy sleep,' never! Calamity and misfortune and attendant ill-health have thrown my system into such disorder, that now I never sleep; and as a necessary consequence, am never awake. The sleep and the being awake—the land and the water—are mingled together, and neither can be enjoyed." Lacking a great store of physical vigor he found his brains carrying on when the tired body could not match its strength. He had a nervous temperament, a wiry nature, and great powers of endurance, but he was entirely prostrated by overexertion. His only means of recuperation was *sleep*, and this he too often lacked. Entry after entry, not only in the first year, but continually thereafter, describes his search for "that fugitive health." He despondently sees himself "tired, jaded, exhausted, devitalized, extinct," "without a particle of strength . . . *pronus*, almost all day," "my strength utterly prostrate from previous efforts" and as "a perpetual memento to myself of the value of health." Despairingly he finished his entries for the first year: "The year is gone. It has 'joined the past eternity.' I shall go with some of them ere long. When will it be?"<sup>3</sup>

To remove his sorrows from his thoughts, to forget himself, and to perform what, to him, was a service to mankind, Mr. Mann plunged into his work with renewed fidelity and vigor. He had been allowed to finish up his pending law cases as rapidly as possible during the first days he was in office. He had traveled from one end of the state to the

<sup>3</sup> Entry, *Journal*, December 31, 1837.

other as an evangel of better schools; he had begun to collect the school returns. He lectured before clubs, lyceums, and school conventions. His labors were prodigious, but could not keep pace with his aspirations.

During his first year in office several basic policies emerged. He placed great emphasis on school libraries. In Mr. Mann's youth, he was privileged to use and to know the advantages of a town library. The law of April 12, 1837, had provided that school districts might raise by taxation, to be expended in purchasing apparatus and common-school libraries, a sum not to exceed thirty dollars for the first year, and ten for any succeeding year, for each school district in the state. The law was permissive only. Mann's early training and his insight into school problems early led him to appreciate the value of a wide diffusion of knowledge through books and to support vigorously the movement to make them available to all the people of the state.

The idea of a common school library probably originated in the State of New York. In 1835, the law of that state had authorized each district in the state to raise by tax, the first year, the sum of twenty dollars, and for any subsequent year, the sum of ten dollars. Power was granted, but there was no inducement to use it. The result was inaction. In 1838, however, Governor Marcy recommended an appropriation of a part of the income from the surplus revenue fund to this cause. The legislature adopted the recommendation and \$55,000 was set aside for three years. The *towns* were required to raise a sum equal to that allotted by the state.

The experience of Massachusetts paralleled that of New York, both in the law which was passed and in its effect. Mr. Mann discovered that a permissive law was not sufficient. In March, 1840, he noted that few districts had taken

advantage of the act: "Only about fifty common-school libraries exist in the three thousand districts of the state; and but few of these have been obtained under the Act of 1837."<sup>4</sup> Most had been the result of benefactions of interested individuals. The absence of interest was attributable to expense, conflict of different schools of thought, the scarcity or entire lack of suitable books, and the need for suitable persons to select them.

During his first year in office steps were taken to provide books satisfactory for the schools. On April 19, 1838, the anniversary of the Battle of Lexington, the Board of Education authorized Mr. Mann to make an arrangement with some publisher to print two series of books, one to be called "The Massachusetts Primary School Library" and the other "The Massachusetts Common School Library." Each series consisted of fifty volumes. The former, prepared especially for children, sold for forty cents a volume; the latter, for more mature readers, for seventy-five cents. The Board assumed no pecuniary responsibility for publishing them. The price and style of binding were fixed by the Board. They were written by individuals "distinguished for learning, judgment, and moral excellence," who were members of different political parties and religious denominations.<sup>5</sup> To avoid partiality in selection and to prevent offense, it was provided that no book should be included in either series which had not previously been approved by every member of the Board of Education.<sup>6</sup>

It is important to note the care with which the project

<sup>4</sup> *The Common School Journal*, Vol. II, March 2, 1840, page 66.

<sup>5</sup> Among the authors chosen were Washington Irving, Jared Sparks, Robert Rantoul, Alonzo Potter, Judge Story, Elizabeth Peabody, Caroline Sedgwick, Benjamin Silliman, and Nathaniel Hawthorne.

<sup>6</sup> His friend, Mary Peabody, wrote to Mr. Mann, asking that he consider a manuscript that her mother had written with a view to publication. He answered her saying: "Each member of the Board shall examine and



was undertaken by the Board, because of the controversy which was to arise. It was a difference over this question which led Mr. Newton to resign his membership and withdraw as a member of the Board. Extensive correspondence between Mr. Newton and Governor Everett indicates that the religious differences of the day were of prime concern and a chief reason why each member was required to read each book under consideration.<sup>7</sup> The first serious attack made upon the Board of Education arose from the circumstance that the law stated specifically that no sectarian books might legally be used in the schools.

It happened in this manner. Mr. Frederick A. Packard, Corresponding Secretary and Editor for the *American Sunday School Union*, wrote to inquire whether Abbott's *Child at Home*, one of ten or twelve volumes for children published by the *Union*, would be admitted into the school-district libraries of the state. After reading it, Mr. Mann replied condemning the book *in toto*, saying he felt that it would be better to have no libraries at all rather than that they should be composed of books such as the one proposed. He set forth clearly that the law forbade the use of sectarian books and why it was expedient that it should do so. Soon thereafter Mr. Packard attacked the Board of Education at a meeting in New Bedford attended by Sunday school workers of the state, and a few months later published a series of three anonymous letters in the *New York Observer*, in which he questioned the general policies of the Board of Education,

*approve every book*, proposed as a candidate, before it becomes a part of the series; and as there are in the Board all the colors of the rainbow, each individual might then be certain that there was nothing in any book that conflicted (?) with his color. With that approach the 'Secretary' has nothing to do. Whether the ten members of the Board would read a manuscript is doubtful . . ." *Mann Papers*. Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>7</sup> *Everett Papers*, Vol. LXVIII, pages 55, 100, entries July 13, 1838, and September 14, 1838. On file at Massachusetts Historical Society.

and particularly its attitude towards religious teaching in the schools. Sharp and vigorous controversy ensued <sup>8</sup> and the basis was laid for a determined sectarian attack upon the so-called "godless" schools. The details of the argument cannot be presented at this point.

Persistently Mr. Mann pursued his plan to establish "non-sectarian" libraries. He believed that they would be a means of education for adults as well as a source of supplementary reading for children. Opportunity for education was to be made universal for adults. In 1839 he investigated the situation regarding libraries in the state. He found there were only three hundred and sixty libraries containing a total of 300,000 volumes in the whole state and that these were available to only one seventh of the population. More than a third were maintained by lyceums. In addition there were ten circulating libraries, with twenty-eight thousand volumes, and the Sunday school libraries with 150,000 volumes. Books for children were almost entirely lacking. The poor man and the laboring man had almost no access to them. In report after report he vigorously assailed the paucity of reading matter; soon a new law was passed by the legislature encouraging the districts to establish libraries by matching the state funds with an equal sum to be appropriated and raised by the district. Again the lead of New York was followed.

A second fundamental project for improving the schools was concerned with securing and equipping better schoolhouses. There was no greater need if the schools were to function efficiently. A third of the districts did not own their own buildings. The schoolhouses of the day were in deplorable physical condition. As was seen in the last chapter, Mr. Mann had issued a supplement to his *First Annual Report*

<sup>8</sup> *Letters*, March 18, 1838, to July 22, 1838. Correspondence bound together is on file among the *Mann Papers*. Massachusetts Historical Society.

on the subject of school buildings. Here, as in so many other projects, he was to borrow from others, to whom he gladly and ungrudgingly gave the credit due them. Five years previously the American Institute of Instruction reported through its Board of Censors, that "if we were called upon to name the most prominent defect in the schools of our country, that which contributes most, directly and indirectly, to retard the progress of public education, and which most loudly calls for a prompt and thorough reform, it would be the want of spacious and convenient schoolhouses." After visiting about eight hundred of them personally and securing information about a thousand more by correspondence, he concluded that this was a correct description of the condition still prevailing. His report definitely and minutely suggests improvements which ought to be made. In the appendix, he reproduced the prize plan which had been printed by the Institute in 1831.

What was the condition which he sought to remedy? Why such concern about the buildings themselves rather than the instruction? Existing schoolhouses were described by Mr. Mann in lectures, in annual reports, and in *The Common School Journal*. They were "old, squalid wigwam structures." He continues:

We can now call to mind several cases which we have witnessed in traveling over the state, where barns, piggeries, and other out-buildings, have been erected according to the most approved style of Gothic architecture, and the abode of brute animals decorated with the profusion of ornament which belongs to that finical order. But the modes of the old schoolhouses did not come from the classic land of the East; their origin was aboriginal,—not copied from Greece or Rome, but rather from the Pequots and Narragansetts. Not only, as we have said before, would many of our schoolhouses furnish an illustration in geography, because five steps would carry the pupil through the five zones; but astronomy

also could be studied in them to advantage, for through the rents in the roof, the stars might be seen as they come to their zenith.<sup>9</sup>

Elsewhere he writes:

I have seen many schoolhouses, in central districts of rich and populous towns, where each seat connected with a desk, consisted only of an upright post or pedestal, jutting up out of the floor, the upper end of which was only about eight or ten inches square, without side-arms or back-board; and some of them so high, that the feet of the children sought after the floor, in vain. They were beyond soundings. Yet on the hard top of these stumps, the masters and misses of the school must balance themselves, as well as they can for six hours a day. . . . I have good reasons for remembering one of another class of schoolhouses, which the scientific would probably call the *sixth* order of architecture,—the wicker-work order, summer-houses for winter residence,—where there was never a severely cold day, without the ink's freezing in the pens of the scholars while they were writing; and the teacher was literally obliged to compromise between the sufferings of those who were exposed to the cold of the windows and those exposed to the heat of the fire, by not raising the thermometer of the latter above ninety degrees, until that of the former fell below thirty. A part of the children suffered the Arctic cold of Captains Ross and Parry, and a part, the torrid heat of the Landers, without, in either case, winning the honors of a discoverer. . . . Just before my present circuit, I passed a schoolhouse, the roof of which, on one side, was trough-like; and down towards the eaves there was a large hole; so that the whole operated like a tunnel to catch all the rain and pour it into the schoolroom. At first I did not know but it might be some apparatus designed to explain the deluge. I called and inquired of the mistress, if she and her little ones were not sometimes drowned out. She said she should be, only that the floor leaked as badly as the roof, and drained off the water.<sup>10</sup>

Mr. Mann had himself taught in a schoolroom, little, if any, better. He found some of the schoolhouses had been

<sup>9</sup> *The Common School Journal*, March 1, 1842.

<sup>10</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Lectures and Annual Reports on Education*, pages 51-52. Boston, 1872.

built so long before "that the age of their erection, like that of the pyramids, was lost in remote antiquity." They were not only very old, but "old for their age." So poor were the buildings that he declares: "Had the schoolhouses in the fourteen counties of the state been put up at auction, there was many a gentleman's mansion, in each of them, which the whole proceeds of the sale of the schoolhouses in his county, would hardly have been sufficient to purchase."<sup>11</sup> He found the poor buildings one reason for the aversion which children had towards the school, and he asserted that instead of whipping a child because he did not like his school, the parent should have been whipped for not providing a better school to which to send him.

The agitation which he inspired on this subject aroused the people. It was his pleasure to report, when he returned from a European trip in 1843, that the buildings in Massachusetts exceeded in quality those he found in the various countries of the Continent. In his last report (1848) just before his retirement he found that the value of the buildings had increased more than fivefold.

Nor was his influence limited to his own state. In other states conditions were as bad or worse. Within a short space of two weeks six thousand copies of the report were scattered far and wide. He writes: "They are already going the Union over. May they do much good! I think they will make the community of children breathe easier." Like improvement was made elsewhere.

A third major policy of far-reaching importance was in the emphasis which was given to extending educational opportunities through reorganization of the school districts. When he entered upon his duties, Mr. Mann had stated that the schools of Massachusetts were no better than they had

<sup>11</sup> *The Common School Journal*, Vol. II, page 2.



been one hundred fifty years earlier. At least a partial explanation of the lack of progress could be found in the absolute autonomy vested in the local school district. Un-supervised, often poorly managed and administered, the small units were doomed to ineffectiveness. Larger units were obtained by two measures: (a) a law empowering two or more contiguous school districts in adjoining towns, when the districts were too small to maintain schools advantageously in each, to form a single combined district having all the powers other school districts had; and (b) a law making provision for union school districts, by which two or more contiguous districts in the Commonwealth could associate themselves to maintain a school for the benefit of older children. Either arrangement could be entered into only by a popular vote of the inhabitants of the districts concerned.<sup>12</sup>

Two main effects resulted from the legislation: The idea of centralization of administration arose, and the ground was laid for the development of the high school. In colonial days the grammar school was maintained for selected upper-class boys who were destined for college as a preparation for professional life. The boys were enrolled selectively on the basis of mental and scholastic ability, social standing of their parents, and with a view to their future callings in life. With the onset of the American Revolution this type of school decreased steadily in popularity and influence, while a new institution, the academy, grew and flourished. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the movement for this newer secondary school was well under way. It furnished a broader education than the Latin grammar school had done, and it popularized secondary education in America. Some were for boys only, some for girls only, and still others for

<sup>12</sup> *Revised Statutes*, chapter 23, section 49; chapter 189, sections 1-8.

both sexes together. But while the grammar school had been public, the academy was a private institution. It had no well-defined standards and there was little connection with the state. In some respects, therefore, it impeded the establishment and development of public high schools. But the movement spread rapidly in consonance with a valid popular demand and in harmony with the current social needs. Before 1800 there were 17 in Massachusetts. The number increased to 36 in 1820, to 55 in 1830, and to 403 in 1850; nor was the increase in other states less rapid. By 1830 there were 168 academies founded in New England, and more than 1,000 in the United States. In 1850 there were 1,007 in New England and more than 7,000 in the United States. The period of greatest development, 1820 to 1830, was in part a result of the generous treatment and firm support given them in the state of New York by the governor, DeWitt Clinton. For their time it seems that the 7,000 academies served the population of the United States as effectively in making secondary education available to the people as the approximately 17,000 high schools of the present time do.

A change in governmental statute in Massachusetts contributed to the decline of grammar schools and the elevation of the academies. In 1824 the "Old Deluder" law was emasculated by an amendment which exempted towns of less than 5,000 inhabitants from its provisions. In 1820 nearly two hundred towns had been required to maintain Latin grammar schools. By the law of 1824 all but seven were released from this necessity by reason of the easy conditions resulting from the amended law. Of course, the privately supported academy flourished with the changed requirement.

But the generally accepted tradition and sentiment of New England, which approved public control and support

of education, was not long dormant. Accordingly the public high school was not long in appearing on the scene to challenge the privately maintained secondary school, and finally to supersede it.

Under the leadership of James G. Carter, the "Father of Normal Schools," agitation was begun which culminated in the law of 1827, a statute which marks the beginning of the high school movement in Massachusetts. A section of the law reads:

And every city, town, or district, containing five hundred families or householders, shall be provided with such teacher or teachers for such term of time as shall be equivalent to twenty-four months, for one school in each year, and shall also be provided with a master of good morals, competent to instruct, in addition to the branches of learning aforesaid, the history of the United States, bookkeeping by single entry, geometry, surveying, and algebra; and shall employ such master to instruct a school, in such city, town, or district, for the benefit of all the inhabitants thereof, at least ten months in the year, exclusive of vacations, in such convenient place, or alternately at such places in such city, or town, or district, as the said inhabitants, at their meeting in March, or April, annually shall determine; and in every city, or town, containing four thousand inhabitants, such master shall be competent in addition to all the foregoing branches, to instruct the Latin and Greek languages, history, rhetoric, and logic.<sup>13</sup>

Severe punishments were attached for violations of the law. In 1835 the effect of the statute was extended by an amended law which permitted any smaller town to form a high school. It was this legislation which marks the beginning of the high-school movement.

Meanwhile, dissatisfaction with the academy arose from certain theoretical and practical considerations. Youths were

<sup>13</sup> *Laws of the State of Massachusetts, January Session, 1827*, chapter CXLIII, Sections 1, 19, 21.

required to leave home at an early age to attend it; only the relatively well-to-do could afford the expense of tuition and maintenance; it was felt that school preparation should be given on the more advanced levels for opportunities in the business and professional world as well as in the academic, and that tuition should be free.

As with the grammar school, Boston led, in May, 1821, by opening an English classical school to supply a three-year course. It was the outgrowth of the belief that there should be a school which could meet the needs of a rising generation of merchants and mechanics. Within a few years it was designated a *high school*. It was not, as is so often stated, an importation from Europe, but was indigenous to the American soil and developed as a uniquely American institution. George B. Emerson, prominent educator and friend of Horace Mann, was chosen as its first principal; he held this office for the first two years. Boys only were admitted; but the idea grew, and in 1826 a high school for girls was opened in the city. By the irony of fate, however, so many girls applied for admission that the dilemma of an overcrowded condition was met by abolishing the school. This action was at the suggestion of Josiah Quincy, the mayor! Other cities were not slow in imitating Boston, however, and high schools were soon founded at Plymouth, Salem, Worcester, and elsewhere.

When the Massachusetts Board of Education was established by the legislature in 1837, the one hundred incorporated academies far surpassed in numbers and influence the nine high schools which had been established in the state prior to that time.

A comparison of the number of each established during Mann's term as secretary (1837-1849) will indicate the rapidity with which the former declined while the latter rose:

PERIOD	NUMBER OF ACADEMIES	NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOLS
1821-30 .....	32	3
1831-40 .....	46	13
1841-50 .....	21	26
1851-60 .....	19	44

Mann's first and consuming interest as secretary was to assure universal education for all the children in the lower schools and to provide the common background which he considered essential to citizenship, rather than to extend the period of training upward. Soon after assuming office he stated:

After the State shall have secured to all its children that basis of knowledge and morality which is indispensable for its own security; after it shall have supplied them with the instruments of that individual prosperity, whose aggregate will constitute its own social prosperity; then they may be emancipated from its tutelage, each one to go whithersoever his well-instructed mind shall determine. At this point, seminaries for higher learning, academies and universities, should stand ready to receive, at private cost, all whose path to any ultimate destination may lie through their halls.<sup>14</sup>

From this quotation it may be inferred that the academies were approved by Mann at least in part for prudential reasons. It must be remembered that many leading citizens were trained in the academies, still strongly supported them, and that Mann was endeavoring to popularize a not too popular cause. This view is borne out by the fact that, two years afterward, in 1839, writing in *The Common School Journal*, Mann deplored the term *high school* because the use of it militated against establishing state-supported secondary schools:

<sup>14</sup> MANN, HORACE—*First Annual Report*. Lectures and Reports on Education, Boston, 1872, page 418.



The law required (i.e., Rev. Statutes, Chapter XXIII, Sec. 5) all towns, whose population exceeds a certain number, to keep a school "*for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the town.*" The law nowhere calls it a high school. It is a "town school," that is, a school for all the *town*, in contradistinction from a "district school" which is a school for the district only. . . . The establishment of many a "town school" has been defeated, because it had the misfortune to be called a "high school." . . . The first piece of advice we would give to those friends of Common School education, who are endeavoring to establish a *town* school, is, not to call it a "high" school. So much may be yielded to those, who in this matter are governed by words and not by things; and when the school has been established, and has done its beneficent work of enlightening the public mind and leading it to regard substances and realities, instead of names and sounds, it will be found a *high* school, only in its eminent usefulness.<sup>15</sup>

Mann contributed to the development and growth of high schools in three distinct ways: (a) by his emphasis upon union districts; (b) by urging support of the public high school rather than of the academy; and (c) by a liberal interpretation of the school law which allowed practically any town to offer high-school subjects.

In his *First Annual Report*, Mann urged the advisability of uniting the district schools into union districts for the education of the older pupils in a school taught by a man during the winter months at a central point. Again in his *Fourth Annual Report* (1840), referring to his previous report, he urged the advisability of the plan, which was seen as promoting the health of pupils since the younger do not have the same needs as the older. It was also cheaper, since women could teach the primary schools for a lower compensation than men who were needed for more advanced pupils:

The Union School is found to improve all the schools of the constituent districts. The children in the lower schools look up-

<sup>15</sup> *The Common School Journal*, Vol. I, December 16, 1839, page 381.

ward to the higher with ambition, and labor more earnestly, that they may be prepared to enter it. So far as my knowledge extends, no districts which have adopted it could be induced to abandon it.<sup>16</sup>

Here were the germs of the centralized school and of the graded school for smaller communities. Later, when in Congress, this view was further amplified in his statement:

For a well-organized system of Common Schools, there should be two hundred children, at least, living in such proximity to each other that the oldest of them can come together in a central school. It is not enough to gather from within a circle of half a dozen miles diameter fifty or sixty children for a single school. This brings all ages and all studies into the same room. A good system requires a separation of school children into four, or at least three, classes, according to ages and attainments. Without this gradation, a school is bereft of more than half its efficiency.<sup>17</sup>

How extensively the "higher branches," in compliance with the laws, were taught is indicated in the *Sixth Annual Report* which summarizes data with reference to the number of "scholars" who were pursuing studies above the elementary subjects prescribed for the lowest grade of the school (1842):

SUBJECTS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
History of the United States.....	10,177
General history .....	2,571
Algebra .....	2,333
Bookkeeping .....	1,472
Latin language .....	858
Rhetoric .....	601
Geometry .....	463
Human physiology .....	416
Logic .....	330
Surveying .....	249
Greek language .....	183

<sup>16</sup> *Fourth Annual Report. Life and Works of Horace Mann*, Vol. III, page 56. Boston, 1891.

<sup>17</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Slavery: Letters and Speeches*, page 44. Boston, 1851.

Other subjects, too, were studied:

In some of the public schools, other branches, such as botany, chemistry, natural history, astronomy, intellectual philosophy, and the French language, are attended to; but, for the highest grade of schools, I have not obtained any particular information respecting them. They are not extensively pursued.<sup>18</sup>

In no uncertain terms Mann urged the importance of advantages for the poor comparable to those of the wealthy, believing that if the common people lacked those advantages: "At once literary castes would arise in society as haughty, as exclusive, as antagonistic, as the Brahmanical." The persuasive voice and the keen and logical intellect of Mann were used to induce the districts of Massachusetts to give adequate support to the high schools. Speaking before a Boston audience he portrayed the inadequacy of the support given to public schools, especially in consideration of their importance under a republican form of government:

With every change in the organic structure of our government there should have been corresponding changes in all public measures and institutions. For every dollar given by the wealthy, or by the State to colleges to cultivate the higher branches of knowledge, a hundred should have been given for primary education. For every acre of land bestowed upon an academy, a province should have been granted to Common Schools. Select schools for select children should have been discarded; and universal education joined hands with universal suffrage. . . . Instead of the old order of nobility a new order should have been created—an order of teachers, wise, benevolent, filled with Christian enthusiasm, and rewarded and honored by all;—an order looking forwards to a noble line of benefactors whom they might help to rear, rather than backwards to ancestors from whom they had basely degenerated. . . . I have thus endeavored to show that with universal

<sup>18</sup> *Sixth Annual Report. Life and Works of Horace Mann*, Vol. III, page 129. Boston, 1891.

suffrage, there must be universal elevation of character, intellectual and moral, or there will be universal mismanagement and calamity.<sup>19</sup>

An enlarged program of studies for the schools was stimulated by Mann's liberal interpretation of the school law. Some favored the *strict* interpretation of the law. Others, of whom Mann was chief, declared for a *liberal* interpretation. Mann held that the provisions of the law were *minimum* only, and that the schools were empowered to go beyond the letter of the statutes:

Respecting the lowest grade of schools known to the law, the statute declares that they shall be kept by teachers of competent ability and good morals, for the instruction of children in orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, and good behavior. On the same ground as before, it is argued, that those are the only branches which can legally be taught in this grade of schools; that composition, rhetoric, bookkeeping, the elements of natural philosophy, the history of the world or even that of our own country, etc., are not merely unprovided for, in our common school districts, but that their introduction is implicitly forbidden. According to the same view, the employment of a teacher, of the most high and varied attainments, *provided a greater compensation be given him, on account of his superior competency*, would also be illegal. On the other side, it is maintained that the length of schools and the range of studies prescribed by the statute, are the minimum but not the maximum; that while every town is obliged to do so much, no town is prohibited from doing more; and, therefore, that any town may sustain schools for any portion of the year and for any grade of studies, which its own discretion may dictate, subject only to the limitation which binds all bodies politic and corporate, of legislative creation; namely that their powers shall not be exercised wantonly or fraudulently. By this construction the powers of the towns, though not wholly unlimited and indefinite, still are not

<sup>19</sup> MANN, HORACE—*An Oration Delivered Before the Authorities of the City of Boston*. Pamphlet, pages 9-10. Boston, 1842.

specifically fixed and bounded; but they contain the germ of expansion, through whose developments our school system may be enlarged from year to year to meet the increasing wants of the community. . . .

But on the other hand, the almost universal practice of the State has been on the side of a liberal construction of the law; and, should it now be found, on an appeal to the highest judicial tribunal, that this construction is erroneous, probably there is not a town in the State, whose taxes for the support of schools have not been granted and levied in violation of law; and hence have been void for excess.<sup>20</sup>

Mann definitely advocated the liberal construction, holding that otherwise the great mass of the children of Massachusetts would be deprived of opportunity for education above the mere rudiments.

In 1847 in the *Eleventh Annual Report* it is repeated that the requirements are minimum; and it is made clear that the entire college preparatory curriculum should be offered to both boys and girls.

The law requires all public schools to be kept by a teacher whose literary qualifications have been examined and approved by a committee chosen for the purpose by the people themselves. Not less than the six following branches are to be taught in every town; namely, orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography and arithmetic. The teaching of "good behavior," which includes all the courtesies of life and all the minor morals, is also expressly enjoined. These peremptory requisitions are the *minimum*, but not the maximum. Any town may enlarge the course of studies to be pursued in its schools as much as it may choose, even to the preparation of young men for the university, or for any branch of educated labor. It may also bestow an equivalent education upon the other sex. The law also contains a further provision (subject, however, to be set aside by the *express vote* of a

<sup>20</sup> *Eighth Annual Report. Life and Works of Horace Mann*, Vol. III, pages 436-438. Boston, 1891.



district or town), that, in every school of more than fifty scholars in regular attendance, an assistant teacher shall be employed. Although there is no statutory provision to this effect in any other of the New England States, yet the good sense of the community everywhere advocates this rule.<sup>21</sup>

These interpretations by Mann, a prominent lawyer, former president of the Massachusetts senate, carried much weight. The Kalamazoo decision (Michigan, 1874) is considered a landmark in the history of education, because it established *legally* and finally the right of the states to offer secondary education and to raise taxes to support it. It does not in the least detract from the decision and its importance to say that the emphasis given by Mann as shown by the foregoing quotations is even more important in the development of the high school. Mann's interpretation gave the authority to every school to expand its curriculum and to assume the functions of a high school should it be practical and should a need develop. Doubtless this interpretation accounts in large part for the rapid growth of high schools during and following Mann's term of office. Massachusetts had assumed leadership, and in this, as in other educational matters, its course was soon followed by the other states. Mann did not fail to see the implications of the decision and the resultant effects upon the schools:

The proportion of students in all the incorporated academies of the State, when compared with the whole number of children between the ages of four and sixteen years, belonging to the State, is a little less than one in fifty. There are private schools, etc., where some of the higher branches are also taught. But in towns which maintain no town high school, or school which, in the language of the law, is "kept for the benefit of all the inhabit-

<sup>21</sup> *Eleventh Annual Report. Life and Works of Horace Mann*, Vol. IV, pages 176-177. Boston, 1891.

ants." nineteen-twentieths, at least, of all the children receive all the school education which they bring into life, at the district school. Only about forty of the three hundred and eight towns of the State, are required by law to keep a school of a higher grade than the Common School; and on complying with a condition, to be noticed below, this class of towns can exempt themselves from the obligation to maintain such higher schools. Suppose then, the ability of our system of Common Schools to confer an enlarged and generous education, to be curtailed and shrunk to the mere teaching of elements,—orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography and arithmetic; and suppose the schools themselves to be restricted to the period mentioned in the law, and what a meagre, parsimonious, impoverished education, would nineteen-twentieths of the children of the State receive.<sup>22</sup>

Massachusetts did not fail! Her sons and daughters had the path to secondary education opened to them; and, as Mann foresaw, the way of opportunity was enlarged. The march of the schools towards universal secondary education had begun.

Again Mr. Mann's fundamental educational philosophy came to the foreground. Contrasted with "the more enlightened governments of Europe where the great doctrines of human rights are dimly seen in theory, and still more dimly recognized in practice" where different sorts of education were projected to meet the needs of different classes, he finds that in a democratic state such education would be incongruous in view of the theories of equality. He was convinced that "Intellectual castes would inevitably be followed by castes in privilege, in honor, in property." Universal education for universal citizenship was the underlying passion of his life.

<sup>22</sup> *Eighth Annual Report. Life and Works of Horace Mann*, Vol. III, pages 438-439. Boston, 1891.

## CHAPTER X

### EDUCATING THE TEACHERS

SCHOOLHOUSES, equipment such as apparatus and libraries, and administrative control are necessary and prerequisite to good schools. But the indispensable factor is a superior teaching body. Lacking skilled and efficient teachers, any school must be a failure. It is not surprising, therefore, that in planning to improve schools one of Mr. Mann's first and principal concerns was to aid teachers to become better prepared for their arduous and important duties. The deplorable state of the school buildings of Massachusetts has already been noted. Textbooks and teachers matched the buildings in unfitness for their purpose. It was said of the common school system in the early thirties that: "Any hovel would do for a schoolhouse, any primer would do for a textbook, any farmer's apprentice was competent to keep school." Teachers were deficient alike in knowledge of subject matter and in understanding of pupils and their mental growth. Governor Briggs once told a story of a schoolmaster who in computing the tuition charges was unable to add the half cents, because he could not compute half cents into mills or whole cents. Nor was this exceptional in that day. He adds: "This was no fiction, but a fair specimen of a class of teachers in the County of Berkshire thirty years ago."<sup>1</sup> Edward Everett Hale writes of the old-time school which was prevalent in his youth: "There was no public

<sup>1</sup> Address by GOVERNOR BRIGGS, West Newton, December, 1847. Printed in *The Common School Journal*, volume X, January 15, 1848, page 27.

school of any lower grade, to which my father would have sent me, any more than he would have sent me to jail. Since that time I have heard my contemporaries talk of the common school training of the day, and I do not wonder at my father's decision. The masters, so far as I know, were all inferior men; there was constant talk of 'hiding' and 'cow-hides' and 'ferules' and 'thrashing' and I should say, indeed, that the only recollections of my contemporaries about those schooldays are of one constant low conflict with men of a very low type." <sup>2</sup> This description shows clearly the contrast of the common schools with the better private schools of the day by one who had received his secondary education in the Boston Latin School. Another well-known author <sup>3</sup> describes the master in any but glowing terms: "Once, having caught a boy annoying a seatmate with a pin, he punished the offender by pursuing him around the schoolroom, sticking a pin into his shoulder whenever he could overtake him. And he had a fearful leather strap, which was sometimes used even upon the shrinking palm of a little girl." The *Boston Transcript* describes editorially, under the caption, "A Brutal Schoolmaster," the inhuman punishment inflicted upon a boy for playing truant. The boy, of delicate constitution, was made to kneel over a desk and was given ninety blows with an instrument of large size at intervals over a period of three hours, resulting in a temporary loss of his ability to walk.<sup>4</sup> The Ichabod Crane type of schoolmaster was still abroad in the land. While the inhumanities here described were doubtless extreme cases, nevertheless they illustrate well only too numerous a type.

<sup>2</sup> HALE, EDWARD EVERETT—*A New England Boyhood*, page 17. Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1920. Used by permission.

<sup>3</sup> LARCOM, LUCY—*A New England Girlhood*, 1889, page 151. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1920. Used by permission.

<sup>4</sup> *Boston Transcript*, editorial, Wednesday, January 11, 1837.

At its best the common method of teacher preparation consisted in attendance at an academy; at the worst, in no education beyond the district school in which the teacher himself was to teach. Worse than the lack of sufficient knowledge of subject matter was the entire absence of training to carry on the teaching process itself. Mr. Mann told a fitting story to illustrate the way in which teachers were initiated into instructional skills. "A bystander, after witnessing a wonderful operation upon the eyes performed by a skillful oculist in London, asked him, 'How in the world did you learn to do it?' He replied, 'By practice, but I spoiled a bushel basketful of eyes in learning how.' " The method of "trial and error" was the usual method of induction into the teacher's work.

With such conditions prevailing, it is little wonder that early American educational reformers found the problem of securing well-qualified teachers one which was paramount. They saw "the scientific preparation of teachers for free schools" as the most important measure which could be taken for the improvement of teaching. To prepare them adequately, it was generally believed by the New England leaders that special institutions ought to be established. The early agitation which had been going on in widely scattered parts of the United States for improved teacher training and for institutions to educate them has been described in a previous chapter.

At this place it is not necessary to trace the origin and development of European institutions for training teachers. Unquestionably American thought and practice was influenced by them. The term *normal school* was first applied to institutions for preparing teachers in Prussia, a pioneer state in teacher training, the name, along with a considerable amount of its practice, coming from that country. It was



doubtless at Mr. Mann's suggestion that the term was used in Massachusetts. He favored using it because "The name is short, descriptive from its etymology, and in no danger of being misunderstood or misapplied."<sup>5</sup> Though the name was borrowed, the American institution itself was unique. There were no precedents on American soil from which to borrow. "And the political and social differences between us and the European nations, where schools for the qualification of teachers have been founded, are so numerous and fundamental that a transcript of their systems, without material modifications, would threaten failure if adopted by us."<sup>6</sup>

During the years immediately preceding the legislation establishing the Board of Education, interest in teacher-training schools had been mounting rapidly. James G. Carter had asked the legislature in 1827 to subsidize an institution conducted by him privately after the plan he had presented in his *Essays on Popular Education*. This was the first formal attempt to establish a seminary for teachers in the State of Massachusetts. The effort was doomed to failure. However, in 1830, Rev. S. R. Hall became principal of a school for preparing teachers at the Andover Academy at Andover, Massachusetts. This school, continuing in successful operation for five years, was a concrete reminder of the value of such institutions. In 1835, Alexander H. Everett, chairman of the Committee on Education of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, in a report on the distribution of the income from the school fund, recommended that a portion of it should be applied to the education of teachers, and cited the example of the Prussian system, of which he printed a summary, written by Dr. Julius, then in this country on a

<sup>5</sup> *The Common School Journal*, Vol. I, January 15, 1839.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 34-37.

commission from the King of Prussia to collect information about prisons.<sup>7</sup> This report, widely circulated, was a sentiment builder. Cousin's famous report was printed in New York in 1835, and the same year a paper summarizing the report was read before The American Institute of Instruction. In November, 1835, Rev. Charles Brooks, Unitarian minister of Hingham, introduced the subject in a Thanksgiving sermon and proposed that a normal school should be



CHARLES BROOKS

established in Plymouth County. He had met Dr. Julius *en route* to America and become enamoured of the Prussian system which had been described to him on shipboard. In his epochal sermon he said: "The whole Prussian system is built on these eight words, *As Is the Teacher, so is the School*, and therefore we must have seminaries for the preparation of teachers, and I hope the first one will be in Plymouth County." He opposed private schools such as had

<sup>7</sup> *American Journal of Education*, Vol. XVII, New Series, page 88.

been proposed by Mr. Carter, and supported "*state normal schools*," owned, supported, and governed by the state for the state's service. During the year 1836, he announced that he would lecture for the cause in any section in Massachusetts without compensation. A flood of invitations came, and until 1838, he went to and fro in the state from the Berkshires to Cape Cod. He also lectured before the legislatures in the states of New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. He spoke before the Massachusetts House of Representatives to an assemblage too large for the hall to hold. He printed his speech in a pamphlet and sent it to each member of the legislature of 1838 which was to consider the question of state normal schools. Among his listeners was Edmund Dwight. Brooks was given a hearing before the committee on education.

Stowe's report was printed in 1837 by the legislatures of Ohio, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, New York, as well as in Massachusetts. The Memorial of the American Institute of Instruction was submitted to the Massachusetts legislature in January, 1837. On February 28, 1837, the noted and revered Boston clergyman, William E. Channing, speaking in Boston before a large and influential audience at the Odeon, made a fervent and impassioned plea for schools and better teachers:

We need an institution for the formation of better teachers; and until this step is taken, we can make no important progress. The most crying need in this Commonwealth is the want of accomplished teachers. We boast of our schools, but our schools do comparatively little, for want of educated instructors. Without good teaching a school is but a name. An institution for training men to train the young would be a fountain of living waters, sending forth streams to refresh present and future ages. As yet,

our legislators have denied to the poor and laboring classes this principal means of their elevation. We trust they will not always prove blind to the highest interest of the state. We want better teachers, and more teachers for all classes of society, for rich and poor, for children and adults. . . . One of the surest signs of the regeneration of society will be the elevation of the art of teaching to the highest rank in the community. When a people shall learn, that its greatest benefactors and most important members are men devoted to the liberal instruction of all its classes, to the work of raising to life its buried intellect, it will have opened to itself the path of true glory. . . . Socrates is now regarded as the greatest man in an age of great men. The name of *king* has grown dim before that of apostle. To teach, whether by word or action, is the highest function of earth. . . . We need a new profession or vocation, the object of which shall be to wake up the intellect in those spheres where it is now buried in habitual slumber. . . . The wealth of the community should flow out like water for the employment of such teachers, for enlisting powerful and generous minds in the work of giving impulse to their race.<sup>8</sup>

After Mr. Mann was appointed secretary, he requested Mr. Brooks to continue his lecturing to secure normal schools. This Mr. Brooks did and he traveled two thousand miles by chaise in his efforts to arouse the public and to contact legislators. Carter's most important work was among his fellow teachers; that of Brooks, among the people and the legislators. In January Mr. Mann gave the first of a series of addresses, instituted by the Board, before the legislature. Later in the same month Brooks gave the second, using as his subject, "Normal Schools and School Reform." Although at first favoring Carter for appointment to the position of secretary, after the selection of Mr. Mann was announced, Mr. Brooks ardently supported him. Speaking of his appointment, he wrote in appreciation of Mann: "On that day

<sup>8</sup> *Memoirs, Speeches, and Writings of Robert Rantoul, Jr.*, pages 101-102. Boston, 1854.

he laid down his lawbooks and took up his schoolbooks, and what a scholar he made himself. Not a man in the Commonwealth could have planned more wisely or executed more successfully. The record of his labors will be his everlasting monument."

Added to voices of these influential advocates was the recommendation of the Board of Education itself. In the first annual report, written by Governor Everett, the claims of teacher training were forcefully presented (February 1, 1838):

It must be admitted, as the voice of reason and experience, that institutions for the formation of teachers must be established among us, before the all-important work of forming minds of our children can be performed in the best possible manner, and with the greatest attainable success. . . . In those foreign countries, where the greatest attention has been paid to the work of education, schools for teachers have formed an important feature in their systems, and with the happiest result. . . . The Board cannot but express the sanguine hope, that the time is not far distant, when the resources of public or private liberality will be applied in Massachusetts for the foundation of an institution for the formation of teachers, in which the present existing defect will be amply supplied.<sup>9</sup>

In his message to the legislature, about the same time, Governor Everett recommended that normal schools be established. The influence and prestige of the popular governor, added to the pleadings of the Board of Education, the memorial of the American Institute of Instruction, the urging of numerous private individuals, and the tireless effort of the secretary (still a power in the legislature, and until the first of the year still a member of the senate), brought irresistible public pressure to bear upon a legislature already

<sup>9</sup> *First Annual Report of the Board of Education*. Quoted in HORACE MANN—*Lectures and Reports on Education*, pages 376-378. Boston, 1872.



somewhat favorable. The final and deciding factor was a concrete proposal made by a member of the Board of Education to give of his private funds to accomplish the purpose.

On March 10, after delivering a lecture before a Boston society, Mr. Mann, in company with a number of other gentlemen, was invited to the home of Mr. Edmund Dwight,



EDMUND DWIGHT

prominent member of the Board, to consider the matter of applying to the legislature for a grant to establish schools for preparing teachers. Much discussion ensued, *pro* and *con*, but "mostly on the *pro* side." As a result Mr. Mann was given authority to say that a member of the Board (Mr. Dwight) would furnish \$10,000 if the Legislature would contribute an equal sum. Three days later he sent a communication to the legislature informing them of the offer. He was elated at the prospect. He comments: "This appears

to be glorious! I think I feel pretty sublime! Let the stars look out for my head!"

A joint committee recommended acceptance of the offer, and a resolution was passed, unanimously in the house of representatives, and with a single dissenting vote in the senate, making the plan effective. It was signed by the Governor on April 19, 1838, the anniversary of the battle of Lexington and Concord. The long conflict was won. There was now a sum of \$20,000 available to prepare teachers for the state. It was a small beginning for a state employing 6,000 teachers, but at least it was a beginning. Mr. Mann observes: "Vast donations have been made in this Commonwealth, both by the government and by individuals, for the cause of learning in some of the higher, and, of course, more limited departments; but I believe this to be the first instance where any considerable sum has been given for the cause of education generally, and irrespective of class, sect, or party."<sup>10</sup>

It was decided to establish three institutions, one in the northeastern, one in the southeastern, and a third in the western part of the state. It should be clearly borne in mind that in the modern sense, these were not "state schools, but the schools of private munificence *aided* by the *state*—the state being responsible neither for success nor failure."<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, it was necessary to solicit and receive additional private help and to supplement the Board's meager resources by funds contributed locally. Buildings, equipment, and money for current expenses were to be provided by the towns in which the schools were to be located. In all, twelve towns of the state expressed an interest and sought to have schools located in their communities. Among them were Concord, Southbridge, Lancaster, Bridgewater, Barre, Lexing-

<sup>10</sup> *Life and Works of Horace Mann*, Vol. II, pages 101-102. Boston, 1891.

<sup>11</sup> STEARNS, EBEN S.—Address in *Memorial of Quarter-Centennial of the Establishment of Normal Schools in America*, page 47.

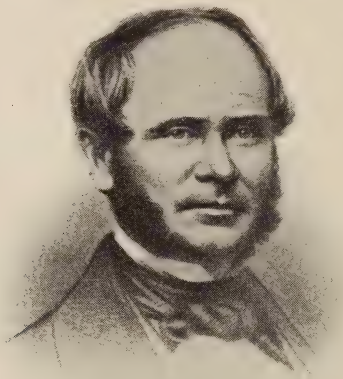
ton, and Northampton. Mr. Mann, as a member of various committees, visited each site in person.

In September, a convention called for the purpose of securing one of the schools was held in Plymouth County. It was attended by President John Quincy Adams, George Putnam, Robert Rantoul, Jr., and Daniel Webster. Mr. Mann was present in his official capacity. Mr. Webster urged support of the public schools and the establishment of normal schools, saying emphatically: "It is a reproach that the public schools are not superior to the private. If I had as many sons as old Priam, I would send them all to the public schools." Mr. Brooks, prominent in the plans for the meeting, was rewarded by the Board's decision to establish a school in that county, the first locality to make a proposal which was accepted, although, because of dispute over location it was not at work until the other two were in operation.<sup>12</sup>

The town of Lexington offered to furnish an academy building located on the Lexington Green free of rental, and the citizens agreed to provide apparatus and make needed repairs. Funds were also raised for operating the school. The Board had guaranteed they would locate a school in any community for an experimental period of three years, providing that buildings, fixtures, and furniture would be furnished, along with the means of carrying on the school. The

<sup>12</sup> There have been numerous disputes about the priority of various schools in teacher training. The following facts seem clear. The first private normal school in the United States was conducted by Rev. S. R. Hall, at Concord, Vermont, in 1823. The first normal school under private auspices in Massachusetts was a division of the Andover Academy, also conducted by Mr. Hall, beginning in 1830. The first normal school aided by state funds was voted for Bridgewater, although its actual opening was deferred until after the school of Lexington was begun. The normal school at Bridgewater is the oldest having a continuous existence on the same site, and having been in continuous operation from its opening, September 9, 1840. The first actually opened was at Lexington, but it was subsequently moved to West Newton, and later to Framingham, where it still remains.

citizens of Lexington having met these conditions, it was voted to locate one of the normal schools there. Thus the Board was required to furnish only the compensation for the teachers. A similar arrangement was entered into at Barre. The three schools were now definitely located and provided for. The first was opened at Lexington, July 3, 1839; the second at Barre, September 4, 1839, and the third at Bridgewater, September 9, 1840.



HENRY BARNARD

Mr. Mann saw the matter of policy as one of superlative importance. Before the Massachusetts normal schools had been suggested to the legislature, he had gone to Henry Barnard's home in Hartford, Connecticut, where the original plan of organization was prepared in consultation with Mr. Barnard and Mr. Thomas H. Gallaudet. Mr. Gallaudet was, in 1838, "the person and the only person" they had in view to fill the office of Secretary of the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools of Connecticut, when the bill was drafted for a public act to provide for the better supervision

of common schools in Connecticut. Because of his age, his poor health, and considerations for his family, he declined the appointment, at the same time urging Henry Barnard to accept.

Immediately after entering the legislature in 1837, Mr. Barnard had interested himself in school reform and had addressed a circular to every member of the body elected to the session of 1838, calling attention to the deplorable condition of the schools. He rendered a most important service to the cause by originating and carrying through the legislature by unanimous vote the bill creating the State Board of Education (May, 1839). He was offered the position declined by Mr. Gallaudet. His prominence in promoting the bill which resulted in creating the post caused him to hesitate, lest his part in the movement be questioned. Reluctantly he at last accepted.

It was a fateful conference, full of significance for the future of education in America. It was characteristic of Mr. Mann to elevate the cause in which he believed above personal considerations. He was, therefore, willing to confer with capable men everywhere to secure their suggestions. It would be an unnecessary and a futile task to attempt to evaluate the contribution which Gallaudet and Barnard each made to the final plan as announced by him. It is enough to state that it was Mr. Mann who energetically advocated and secured legislative measures and who put them into execution in Massachusetts. On general policies in teacher training the men saw eye to eye, as is evidenced by the fact that Mr. Mann later asked each to become head of a normal school of his state.

Because the general directions, not only for Massachusetts, but for the country, were outlined at this time, the pattern adopted was of superlative importance. The first



question for decision was whether Massachusetts should follow the lead of New York, and attach the new institutions, as divisions in them, to existing academies and colleges or should establish separate teacher-training institutions. In contrasting the two plans, Mr. Mann wrote prior to the opening of the first of the new schools:

The course of studies prescribed for the two is not materially different . . . the striking point of dissimilarity is, that in New York, the Teachers' Department is engrafted upon the Academy;—it is not the principal, but an incidental object of the institution;—it is not primary, but secondary; it does not command the entire and undivided attention of the instructors, but shares that attention with the general objects for which the Academy was founded; it may fail and the Academy still survive. In Massachusetts, the business of the normal school is to possess the entire and exclusive occupancy of the whole ground; to engross the whole attention of all the instructors and all the pupils; to have no rival of any kind, no incidental or collateral purposes, and the very existence of the school will be staked on its success.<sup>13</sup>

He feared, too, that if the academy plan were adopted, the study would be extended into higher branches rather than to a review of the elementary subjects. Believing, as he did, that the main purpose of the training in the normal school was skillful imparting of knowledge, he found its function diametrically opposed to that of the academy which was primarily one of acquisition. With different purposes for their students, he thought it wiser to have them educated separately.

Attendance at Lexington was limited to women only. This was a policy of supreme importance. At the time it was the practice for women to teach in the summer terms when only the younger and smaller pupils attended. The men taught in

<sup>13</sup> *The Common School Journal*, Vol. I, March 15, 1839, pages 83-84.

the winter terms when, with larger and older pupils, problems of instruction and discipline were more difficult and more formidable. Mann had early advocated larger employment of women as teachers, especially in the primary grades. In his view he was in fundamental accord with the thought of other educational leaders of the time. Mr. Barnard believed that, so long as so many other means for advancement and accumulation of property were open to men, it was necessary to depend upon women.<sup>14</sup> At the same time Mr. Gallaudet called attention to the deficiency of male teachers, favored the appointment of more women, and urged one seminary in Connecticut to prepare them.<sup>15</sup> Other influential advocates of women as teachers were Hall, Carter, Russell, Woodbridge, Catherine Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Emma Willard, and Governor Seward. Mann urged that women are better fitted by nature than are men to train and educate *young* children. They were found to be freer from vulgar practices and political ambitions. He argued that they are "more mild and gentle"; that they have "stronger parental impulses"; that they are "less withdrawn from their employment"; that in them there is "less intent and scheming for future honors and emoluments," and that they are possessed of "purer morals."<sup>16</sup> Another practical consideration was the fact that it was cheaper to secure their services. In announcing the opening at Lexington Mr. Mann had stated: "We believe it will be the first normal school, properly so called, in the world, exclusively dedicated to the female sex."<sup>17</sup>

The continual emphasis which Mr. Mann and others placed on this subject was productive of results. The per-

<sup>14</sup> *Connecticut Common School Journal*, September, 1838, Vol. I, page 10.

<sup>15</sup> *Connecticut Common School Journal*, Vol. I, page 34.

<sup>16</sup> *Fourth Annual Report*, January 13, 1841.

<sup>17</sup> *The Common School Journal*, Vol. I, pages 85-89, 1839.

centage of women teaching in the schools increased from 60.2 to 64 during the years from 1837 to 1842, and to 68.2 in 1850. During the seven years from 1837 to 1844 the increase of men teachers was only 6.7 per cent; of women, 41.8 per cent. Teaching became a main outlet for women who sought an occupation, and the normal school became an important agency in women's education. Chartered in February, 1836, Mt. Holyoke had (November, 1837) begun its career in the education of women by admitting a group of eighty students. Curiously enough, Mary Lyon, its founder, began her work in the same year in which Mr. Mann became secretary, and died in 1849, the last year that Mann occupied that office. Doubtless the success of this venture in women's education encouraged Mr. Mann in his intention to prepare women for teaching at the Lexington school. He retained throughout his term of office his early convictions on this subject. In a lecture delivered after his resignation as secretary, he said: "That woman should be the educator of children, I believe to be as much a requirement of nature as that she should be the mother of children. . . . Education, I say emphatically, is woman's work—the domain of her empire, the sceptre of her power, the crown of her glory."<sup>18</sup>

In keeping with the purpose of the normal school, it was decided to have a curriculum designed specifically to prepare teachers for the common schools. The course of study had for its purpose a "more thorough and systematic acquaintance with the branches usually taught in common schools," along with other branches of knowledge useful to a teacher. The second object was to teach the "art of imparting instruction to the youthful mind, which will be taught in its principles, and illustrated by opportunity for practice, by means

<sup>18</sup> MANN, HORACE—*A Few Thoughts on the Powers and Duties of Women*, pages 83-84. Syracuse, 1853.

of a model school." All subjects required to be taught in the common schools were presented, with the exception of the ancient languages and of the principles of Christian piety common to the different sects of Christians, and were to be "carefully inculcated." A portion of the Scriptures was to be read daily in all the normal schools established by the Board.<sup>19</sup> Ancient languages were not offered.

It is interesting to observe that a "model school" or school of practice, now considered the "heart of the normal school" was a prominent feature of teacher-training institutions from the beginning and that one was put into operation during the very first year of the schools.

Mr. Mann, a thorough believer in the doctrine of the "perfectibility of man," saw the school as an institution which would regenerate society, which would bring about many needed reforms, and which would bring about the changes in society he so fervently preached and advocated. Only the very best, therefore, would be good enough for the schools. Then, as now, the prime problem in creating a superior school was to have a superior personnel of teachers and administrators. The success or failure of the whole project hung largely upon the principals who were selected to manage the institutions. To secure them was one of the most difficult of the many difficult tasks which Mr. Mann was called upon to perform. To attend meetings of the Board of Education relative to the normal schools and to visit different towns to determine their eligibility for normal schools consumed about one hundred days of his time and caused him to travel more than twenty-five hundred miles.

Contrary to a generally held belief, the position of principal at the time did not appeal to leading educators as a sinecure. Thomas H. Gallaudet was first asked to assume

<sup>19</sup> See *Second Report of the Board of Education*, 1838.



the principalship at Lexington. He declined the position. Four others were approached, but each, in turn, declined.<sup>20</sup> Finally, the sixth, Cyrus Pierce, of Nantucket, agreed to assume the task.

The building having been equipped, the curriculum planned, the principal selected, and the opening announced, all was in readiness for launching the new venture. Mr.



FIRST STATE NORMAL SCHOOL IN THE UNITED STATES  
LEXINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Mann saw that the opening was an event of immense portent. On July 2, 1839, he entered in his journal:

Tomorrow we go to Lexington to launch the first normal school on this side of the Atlantic. I cannot indulge at this late hour of night, and in my present state of fatigue, in an expression of the train of thought which the contemplation of this event awakens in my mind. Much must come of it, either of good or of ill. I am sanguine in my faith that it will be the former. But the good will

<sup>20</sup> They were, in order, Rev. Jacob Abbott, Roxbury; Alonzo Potter, Union College, Schenectady, New York; Professor E. S. Snell, Amherst College; Professor George W. Keely, of Waterville College.



not come of itself. That is the reward of effort, of toil, of wisdom. These, as far as possible, let me furnish. Neither time nor care, nor such thought as I am able to originate, shall be wanting to make this an era in the welfare and prosperity of our schools; and, if it is so, it will then be an era in the welfare of mankind.<sup>21</sup>

The next day the board of visitors, composed of Jared Sparks, Robert Rantoul, Jr., and Mr. Mann, proceeded to Lexington for the opening and to examine those wishing to enroll as students. Torrents of rain were falling, and only three students—all young women—presented themselves. It had been required that applicants be sixteen years of age, in good health, of good character, and duly intending to enter teaching service. The examinations were conducted in reading, writing, orthography, English grammar, geography, and arithmetic. Students were admitted for one year, although a three-year course was contemplated. Tuition was free, the student paying for his own board, textbooks, and incidental expenses. The outlook was discouraging. The unpromising opening only aroused Mr. Mann to firmer resolution. "What remains but more exertion, more and more, until it *must* succeed?" he asserts in his journal. For here, in the words of Cyrus Pierce, the principal, began "a new battle against ignorance, and bad teaching." Girls, as students, were to be the "Minute Men of the new war." Little could the seven—the principal, the students, and the board of visitors, participating in the scene—envisage the situation a century later when a million teachers would be serving the nation, nearly all of whom were to have the advantage of preparation in accredited institutions for the training of teachers. During the first year, the total reached only twenty-five, who were called collectively "the first class of the first state normal school in America."

<sup>21</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Journal*, page 112. *Mann Papers*.

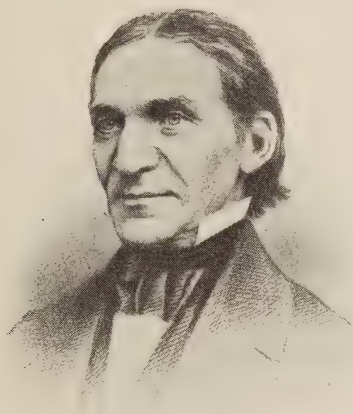
As the small beginning did not serve to inspire great confidence, neither did the physical equipment of the school arouse sanguine hopes. The building was a frame structure, two stories high, only fifty by forty feet in dimensions. On the first floor were a parlor and bedroom for the steward, a sitting room for the young ladies who boarded at the school, and a schoolroom used by the model school. A second floor had a classroom for the prospective teachers, and five dormitory rooms. The attic furnished four additional dormitory rooms. *In toto* the building was able to accommodate twenty boarding students. It was worth perhaps five thousand dollars. The scant equipment can be easily listed. There were two stoves for heating; two maps; a pair of globes; and apparatus for illustrating principles of natural philosophy and astronomy; and a small library containing one hundred selected books in the field of education and for reference.<sup>22</sup>

The principal was administrator, faculty and advisor. He organized and managed the school, taught ten subjects a term—seventeen different subjects the first year—and was the sole instructor for the broad variety of studies. He planned professional courses, organized and taught in the model school, and served as critic teacher, with no aids except student help such as he was able to enlist. Following the custom of the day when teachers often arose at three o'clock to build fires in district schools, he was the school janitor. Busy from dawn till midnight, teaching a long school day in addition to performing the onerous duties of administrator, he often allowed himself only three hours of sleep, and it was little wonder that a few years found him a physical and nervous wreck.

A remarkable man was needed for the position and a truly

<sup>22</sup> Letter of Cyrus Pierce to Henry Barnard, January 1, 1841, printed in *Connecticut Common School Journal*, 1841, page 164.

remarkable man was found. Mr. Cyrus Pierce, the incumbent, was a graduate of Harvard, a Unitarian minister, and a successful teacher in private schools. He had the heart and mind of a reformer. He advocated abolition of war and took such an active part in the temperance movement that he was charged with fanaticism. He favored admitting colored children into the white schools. At the time of his appointment he was organizing the public schools of Nantucket into a



CYRUS PIERCE

graded school with primary, intermediate, grammar and high school divisions. This was an innovation at the time Horace Mann had visited Nantucket while on a tour inspecting schools; he had been very favorably impressed by the work. Pierce was a "born teacher." He was rigorous in his methods and discipline, yet he succeeded in winning the affection of his pupils. At Lexington students soon learned to call him "Father Pierce." He was a real "teacher of teachers." Like Mr. Mann, he had earnest zeal and reverence for truth, and

his repeated admonition to his pupils in closing the school day was: *Live to the Truth*. This phrase was adopted as the motto of the school, a testimony to the life motive of the revered and honored leader. Racked by ill-health, he wished to resign (December, 1840) after serving only a little more than a year at his post. But as the normal schools were now under vicious attack, Mr. Mann insisted that he remain. He complied, saying courageously: "Truly I would rather die than that the *experiment* should fail through my unfaithfulness or inefficiency." After the legislature by its appropriations had assured the continuance of the experiment (March 2, 1842), he resigned in the following autumn.

Samuel J. May, also a Unitarian clergyman, selected by Mr. Mann as Pierce's successor, had for some months been pastoral assistant to William Ellery Channing. He was a leader in the Peace Society, a firm advocate of temperance, a champion of equal rights for women, and an ardent abolitionist. So unreservedly did he enter into all manner of humanitarian movements that he was called by Amos Bronson Alcott, his brother-in-law, "the Lord's chore boy." Six times he had been mobbed for antislavery activities. He had been dubbed "The St. John of the Garrisonians." At the Anti-slavery Convention of 1833, held in Philadelphia, he served on a committee along with William Lloyd Garrison and John Greenleaf Whittier to draft a *Declaration of Principles*. Mr. Mann was somewhat anxious about his anti-slavery propensities, writing to Mr. Pierce after his resignation: "Mr. Samuel J. May is probably to become principal of the school at Lexington. There will be at first an outcry on account of his abolition principles; but I believe he will be conscientious enough not to become a proselyter instead of a teacher." That his fears were not ungrounded is shown in Mr. May's later activities in behalf of the abolitionist

cause, when Mr. Mann warned him that he threw himself open to the charge of neglecting his duties as principal, endangered the normal school cause, and divided support for the schools.

As the town of Lexington was in arrears in payments and indifference was shown towards the school, as the end of the three years' trial period approached, Mr. Pierce had sug-



WEST NEWTON STATE NORMAL SCHOOL

gested that it be removed to another town. The enrollment had so increased that not more than one half of the pupils could be accommodated. Meanwhile, Mr. Pierce had resigned and Mr. May, his successor, seeing no hope for continuance at Lexington, visited several other towns in the vicinity, and found in West Newton a suitable building and grounds and an apparent popular interest in securing the school. A building worth almost \$3000 was to be had for half that price. But the Board of Education had no funds with which to purchase properties, their funds being available only for instruc-



tional purposes. Mr. Mann was equal to the occasion. He rushed to the office of Josiah Quincy, Jr., in Boston, and said: "Quincy, do you know of anyone who wants the highest seat in the kingdom of Heaven, for it is to be bought for \$1,500?" Mr. Quincy inquired his meaning. After his explanation Mr. Quincy gave him a check for the amount, saying that he was at liberty to take out a deed in his own name, and in case the normal school was discontinued, to use the proceeds from the sale of the building in any way he chose to further the cause of common school education. It was found that about \$2,500 would be needed to fit up the building. Citizens of West Newton gave \$600, and Mr. Mann used \$1,500 of his own funds. Mr. May was provided with two assistants and the institution prospered despite severe attacks from enemies. After two years Mr. May resigned and the post was resumed by Mr. Pierce, who retained it during the remainder of the term of Mr. Mann's secretaryship. Later the school was removed to Framingham, where it now remains, the successor of the first state normal school in America.

Rev. S. P. Newman, an orthodox minister, a former professor and acting president of Bowdoin College, and author of several important textbooks for colleges, was chosen to the principalship at Barre. The school opened September 5, 1839, when twenty students, twelve young ladies and eight young men, entered. Governor Everett had been prevailed upon by Mr. Mann to deliver the opening address, an incident of great importance, since it definitely joined the force of his office with the movement in the public mind. His address showed keen interest in, and thorough knowledge of, educational problems. He comprehensively set forth the four-fold plan on which the normal schools were being established: (a) "A careful review of the branches of knowledge

required to be taught in our common schools." "The teacher must know things in a masterly way, curiously, nicely and in their reasons." (b) "The second part of instruction in a normal school is the art of teaching. . . . There is a peculiar art of teaching." (c) "The best method of governing a school—that is, of exercising such a moral influence in it as is most



FRAMINGHAM STATE NORMAL SCHOOL

favorable to the improvement of the pupil—will form a very important part of the course of instruction designed to qualify teachers for their calling." (d) "There is to be established a common or district school as a school of practice, in which, under the direction of the principal of the school, the young teacher may have the benefit of actual exercise in the business of instruction." Mr. Mann was much pleased with the address, and felt much relieved that two normal

schools were at last under way. A few days thereafter he wrote to his friend, the philosopher, George Combe: "The opening of the two normal schools and the finding of two suitable and acceptable individuals to take charge of them, cost me an incredible amount of anxiety. I believe I counted over all the men in New England by tale before I could find any who would take the schools without a fair prospect of ruining them. But I trust we have succeeded." <sup>23</sup>

After two years the failing health and consequent death of Mr. Newman left the school without a principal. It did not seem advisable to continue the school in its location at Barre. The town was without a railroad and difficult of access, there was waning local interest, and the school seemed unlikely to prosper. For three years (1841-1844) it was suspended, because of the local conditions and because of the difficulty in securing a suitable principal.

We have now seen that the three schools were safely launched before the end of 1840. But serious difficulties were in the making. There had been mutterings and assaults from various disaffected individuals and groups. In his journal Mr. Mann recorded that the year, "from ill-health, from opposition in the sacred cause which I have wholly at heart, and from being called upon to do impossible things by the Board of Education, has been the most painful year—save *the* year—<sup>24</sup> that I have ever suffered. . . . I enter upon another year not without some gloom and apprehension, for political madmen are raising voice and arm against the Board, but I enter it with determination."

The next year was indeed to be a year of trial for the Board and for the normal schools. Because of the ill-health of a member of his family, Governor Everett had declined

<sup>23</sup> Letter to George B. Combe, Esq., September 11, 1839. *Mann Papers*.

<sup>24</sup> Referring to the year in which his first wife had died.

to be a candidate for renomination on the Whig ticket. The opposing Democratic Party, capitalizing the financial depression of 1837 and the still troubled conditions, were successful in electing their oft-defeated candidate, Marcus Morton, by a majority of a single vote. In his address before the two houses of the legislature,<sup>25</sup> he urged reform in the administration of the state finances and reduction of the state debt. "Let retrenchment be a substitute for taxation," he declared. He advised the legislature to reduce any excessive expenditures, and to eliminate entirely "any supernumerary officers, or any agencies or commissions not immediately necessary for the public good." He strongly advocated local control of the schools by the town and district meetings, those "nursery of pure democracy." He made no mention at all of the Board of Education. Although he did not attack it, neither did he support it, and by implication he opened the way for an attack by others. A week later Mr. Mann entered the significant observation: "Some partisan men are making efforts to demolish the Board of Education; but all the jealousies which ignorance engenders cannot be entered and recorded here. It is my fortune to stand as the pioneer of this movement; and, like other pioneers, I cannot expect to escape unscathed."

The law requiring towns to maintain a high school was repealed "the only backward movement, the State has made," Mann said, during his term of office.<sup>26</sup> On March 7, 1840, the committee on education of the house of representatives reported that they considered the operations of the Board of Education as "incompatible with the principles on which the common schools are founded and maintained." They asserted that the Board was tending to seize power,

<sup>25</sup> January 22, 1840.

<sup>26</sup> *Twelfth Annual Report*, page 30.



that as an agency for collecting and diffusing information it was inferior to other agencies, and that it was trying to introduce foreign school systems, especially French and Prussian. There was complaint that the statistical reports required too much of the teacher's time to the neglect of more important duties. Objection was made to the libraries which were prepared under the Board's direction. The concentrated point of attack was the introduction of foreign systems into the schools. They found foreign schools ill-adapted to American conditions, because they appeared to have been devised "more for the purpose of modifying the sentiments and opinions of the rising generation, according to a certain government standard, than as a mere means of diffusing elementary knowledge." The normal schools, which they declared imitated those of France and Prussia, had no apparent advantages over academies and high schools which cost the Commonwealth nothing. Since schools ran only a few months in a year, it was impossible for teaching to become a profession. The committee believed that "every person, who has himself, undergone a process of instruction, must acquire, by that very process, the art of instructing others." They found that the creation of the Board, the organization of normal schools, and the sanction of a particular library was "a great departure from the spirit of our institutions—a dangerous precedent." It was feared that teachers would be formed after one model, competition would be destroyed, and improvement would be scuttled. It was recommended that the bills establishing the Board of Education and normal schools be rescinded, and the remainder of the money given by Mr. Dwight be refunded to him.

Mr. Mann prepared at once to meet the attack. A minority report was soon forthcoming, which asserted that the evils which the Committee had feared were nonexistent and imagi-



nary. It was shown that the members of the Board itself had diverse interests; that they served without pay; and that the secretary himself served for a small salary; that school-houses had been improved; that many common-school conventions had been held; that the secretary had himself recognized important differences between the normal schools here and abroad; that the donation of Mr. Dwight was the first in two centuries by a wealthy man for the general benefit of the common schools of the state. Attached to the report were letters from George B. Emerson, and Samuel G. Howe. In the midst of the legislative conflict, Mr. Everett had written in support of the normal schools:

I believe almost all persons, who have bestowed much attention on this subject, are of the opinion that our common schools in general stand in need of great improvement, and that this can take place in no way so effectually as by increasing the qualifications of instructors. Concurring in this opinion, I have labored to promote that object; and could not but rejoice in the opportunity afforded by the concurrence of public and private liberality, to make a fair experiment of institutions for the education of teachers. If this and other operations of the Board of Education can escape the vortex of party, I think they will succeed. If, in addition to what they have to contend with, in the divisions of opinion that generally arise as to new undertakings, they must struggle with party opposition, they will probably fail. I cannot perceive who is to be the wiser or the better, for defeating an experiment to ascertain the value of what elsewhere has been found an all-important improvement in the business of education; particularly as but one-half of the expense is to be borne by the State.<sup>27</sup>

At Mr. Everett's request, Mr. Mann had written to Henry Barnard, asking him to come to Boston to help save the situation. He responded at once, and the trio, Everett,

<sup>27</sup> Letter to Whig Convention, March 11, 1840, in reply to Committee notifying him of nomination as Governor.

Barnard, and Mann, working privately among the members of the legislature, were able to turn the scales from a majority of two against the State Board and the normal schools into a decided majority in their favor.<sup>28</sup> Thus was the most serious attack made upon the cause of education defeated and the threatened danger averted.

How significant the victory was is well described by a participant in the struggle:

The friends of public schools, and of special institutions for the qualification and improvement of teachers, and of state supervision of the great interest of education, in every state, owe a large debt of gratitude to those men who achieved a triumph for the Board of Education, the normal schools and Mr. Mann, in the legislature of Massachusetts, in 1840. Defeat there and then, added to the disastrous policy in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Connecticut, about the same time, in reference to common schools, would have changed the whole condition of public instruction in this country, for a half century, if not forever.<sup>29</sup>

To the mind also of another competent observer, George Combe, who wrote an anonymous article on the Massachusetts crisis in which he reviewed the situation, the outcome was of no less importance to the cause of education abroad:

If the motion to abolish the Board, and the normal schools had passed both houses of the legislature, and if no better institutions had been substituted in their stead, the cause of democracy would, by that act, have sustained a severer blow in Europe than it has suffered since the enormities of the French Revolution.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> HUGHES, JAMES L.—*New England Magazine*, Vol. XIV N. S., pages 567-568, July, 1896.

<sup>29</sup> BARNARD, HENRY—*American Journal of Education*, December, 1858, pages 638-639.

<sup>30</sup> *Edinburgh Review*, July, 1841.

Another abortive effort was made the following year to transfer the powers and duties of the Board to the governor and his council, and of the secretary, to the secretary of state. Governor Davis, now in the chair, fearing for personal popularity, was no more active in the cause of the schools than his predecessor, Mr. Morton, had been. But the friends of education were active. Mr. Barnard, who had visited Lexington the previous year, had written: "We know of no institution on this side of the Atlantic, at all comparable with this for the training of teachers for the common schools. If it is permitted to go down, it will be a burning disgrace, not only to the legislature which shall refuse to sustain it by liberal appropriations, but to the friends of common school education generally."<sup>31</sup>

In 1842, there was a very good attitude in the legislature towards the Board and its activities. Dr. James G. Palfrey, editor of *The North American Review*, was chairman of the Committee on Education in the House. Mr. Mann enthusiastically writes: "All the committees of both houses are friendly to the cause; my two best friends there, Mr. Quincy, and Mr. Kinnicut of Worcester, being respectively president of the senate, and the speaker of the house. If they could not give me good committees, of what use would it be to have one's friends in these offices? A bill is now pending before the legislature to grant further aid for the continuance of the normal school, and to encourage, by a small bonus, the respective districts of the state to purchase a small school library. We have pretty strong hopes it will pass."<sup>32</sup> It did pass, and the Board of Education was granted a sum of six thousand dollars annually for a three-year period to continue the three normal schools. By the same act an appro-

<sup>31</sup> *Connecticut Common School Journal*, April 1, 1841, page 164.

<sup>32</sup> Letter to George Combe, February 28, 1842. *Mann Papers*.

priation was made granting each school district fifteen dollars for a library, provided the district itself would match this sum with an equal amount from its own funds.

This legislative triumph having been achieved, the time seemed ripe for reopening the Barre school. The Board turned to Calvin E. Stowe, well-known author of the famous school report, and offered him the principalship. But feeling that the moral and religious situation in the West demanded that he remain in Cincinnati, he declined. Just about this time the Connecticut legislature had repealed the law establishing the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools and Barnard's secretaryship of the Board was dispensed with, leaving him free to accept another position. Barnard was no stranger to Barre or to Massachusetts. He had delivered such a convincing speech in the town on behalf of graded schools and had aroused such popular enthusiasm, that Mr. Mann had exclaimed to him: "If you will deliver that speech in ten places in Massachusetts, I will give you a thousand dollars." He was extended an invitation to head the school. Because of his close connection with Mr. Mann and the Massachusetts situation, and because of his interest in the cause of teacher training, he was inclined to accept, and agreed to do so under certain terms and conditions which he thought essential for the success of the venture.

He insisted that he could not continue the school at Barre, and suggested that it be removed to Springfield. He asked for the services of assistants so that his own time would be at least partially free for correspondence with friends of education in the vicinity of the school to secure their support and especially to secure well-qualified candidates for entrance. On any other basis he felt he should fail. The demands seemed reasonable enough. But the small appropriations at the disposal of the Board prevented their fulfilling his condi-

tions. So after a correspondence of five months, he declined the proffered position, voicing the fear that unless the quality of teaching in the normal schools should be improved and more publicity given to the institutions, the legislature would cease its support at the end of the three years for which provision had been made. Quite at variance with Mr. Mann's views, he made the suggestion that instead of establishing a separate institution, it would be better to spend the money to pay the salary of a man to be connected with the Westfield Academy or the seminary of South Hampton, and another man or two women at Mt. Holyoke Seminary at South Hadley, these instructors to devote themselves exclusively to the preparation of teachers. Mr. Mann and Mr. Edmund Dwight had favored a relocation in Springfield. Mr. Mann regretfully wrote: "Could Mr. Barnard have been supplied with the means of conducting the school on as large a scale as he desired, he would have undertaken it, and before this time, instead of an addled egg, we should have had a good chicken—herself to lay eggs soon."<sup>33</sup> The Board of Education, contrary to Mann's judgment, finally decided upon a location at Westfield. "*Inter nos*, it is strongly against my own opinions, especially if the academy at Westfield cannot be given up. But it is too late to recede."<sup>34</sup> Rev. Emerson Davis, an orthodox minister, was chosen head of the resuscitated institution.

The third of the normal schools was opened at Bridgewater, September 9, 1840, with Nicholas Tillinghast, a former instructor at West Point and in private and public schools of Boston, as principal. Like many early educational reformers, he was a Unitarian. The school was ordered on the same general plan and pattern as the two formerly

<sup>33</sup> Letter of HORACE MANN to James H. Mills, November 29, 1843. *Mann Papers*.

<sup>34</sup> Letter to Cyrus Pierce, July 19, 1845. *Mann Papers*.



established. Even before it was in operation, a movement was on foot to discontinue the Board of Education, and to abandon normal schools—a movement whose failure has already been described.

The year 1842 was a year of triumph. The *Fifth Annual Report*, issued early in the year, had been received with enthusiastic acclaim, and had been reprinted in many other states and countries. Grants had been voted for libraries and normal schools, town appropriations had increased, people were becoming more interested, Mr. Brimmer's donation for publishing a work on education had been received, and the legislature was in friendly mood. Mr. Mann, too, had been honored with an invitation to address the authorities of the City of Boston,<sup>35</sup> giving an oration which was well received. As his theme he had selected "A Demonstration That Our Existing Means for the Promotion of Intelligence and Virtue are Wholly Inadequate to the Support of a Republican Government." He closed with the admonition, "*Teach This People.*" Within a few months 20,000 copies had been distributed to every corner of the country and more were being printed. Charles Sumner wrote to his brother, George: "It is the noblest production ever called forth by that celebration. . . . It is a plea for education. To this cause Mann had devoted himself as an apostle. It is beautiful to see so much devotion and such exalted merit joined to such modesty."<sup>36</sup> His personal prestige and fame were never higher. But with the accession of friends came even more hostile attacks from enemies. Of the vicious and caustic opposition more must be said in a later chapter.

<sup>35</sup> Among others who have delivered this occasional oration are John G. Palfrey, Josiah Quincy, Jr., George W. Curtis, Charles Francis Adams, and Charles Sumner.

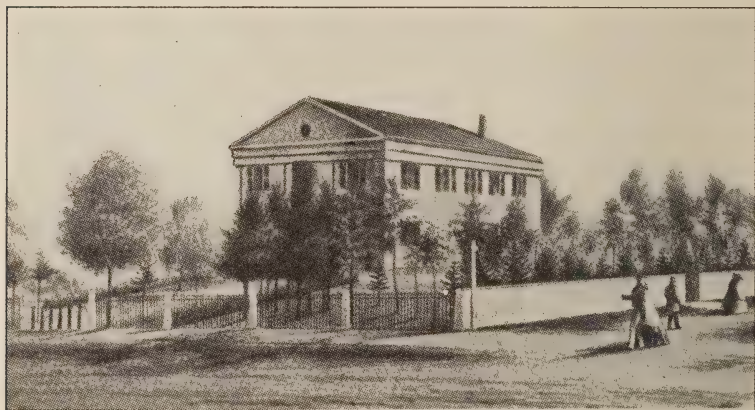
<sup>36</sup> PIERCE, EDWARD L.—*Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner*, Vol. II, page 223. Boston, 1877.

It was a source of great joy as well as a personal vindication when, in 1844, the State of New York decided to follow the plan of Massachusetts in opening a normal school devoted exclusively to the preparation of teachers. Asked to recommend a principal, Mr. Mann suggested David P. Page, principal of the high school at Newburyport. On his way to enter upon his duties, Mr. Page called upon Mr. Mann for advice, which was freely given. So his influence spread!

Up to 1846 the schools, except at West Newton, were maintained in rented buildings, or buildings furnished by the towns, and the state merely granted aid in supporting them. During the winter of 1844-1845, thirty or forty friends of Mr. Mann, among whom were Charles Sumner, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Charles Brooks, incensed by the attacks which had been made upon him and his work, and wishing to show him their sympathy and support, met in Boston to plan some appropriate token of regard. At first it was proposed to give him a gift, but on maturer thought it was decided that he would appreciate far more some definite and substantial aid in carrying forward the work to which he had devoted his powers and his life. Fully sensing that the normal schools were the center of his plans for elevating the common schools, it seemed that to furnish suitable and permanent homes for the institutions would be especially appropriate. Accordingly, those who were present pledged themselves to furnish \$5,000, which they asked the legislature to match with an equal sum. In the spring of 1845, a bill was passed appropriating that amount; it was resolved: "That the schools heretofore known as normal schools, shall be hereafter designated as *state* normal schools." Building was immediately started, and in the fall of 1846, the two buildings, one at Bridgewater, the other at Westfield, were ready for dedication. Evolution of the institutions into state

normal schools was now complete. They were owned, controlled, and financed by the state.

The dedicatory exercises of the Bridgewater state normal schoolhouse were held August 19, 1846. Governor Briggs, two members of the State Board of Education, John A. Shaw, superintendent of schools at New Orleans, and George B. Emerson were present along with many clergymen, teachers, and professional men. Though the frame structure,



FIRST STATE-OWNED NORMAL SCHOOL BUILDING IN THE UNITED STATES,  
DEDICATED AUGUST 19, 1846, BRIDGEWATER, MASSACHUSETTS

sixty-four by forty-two feet, was itself unimpressive, judged by modern standards, the occasion was one fraught with significance for the future of teacher education. Mr. Bates, a member of the Board of Education, delivered the principal address. But the "remarks" of Mr. Mann will be remembered long after the words of the main speaker shall have been forgotten. He was filled "with an extravagance of joy." Fully cognizant of the import of the occasion he introduces his remarks: "Mr. President: I consider this event as marking an era in the progress of education—which, as we all

know, is the progress of civilization—on this western continent and throughout the world. It is the completion of the first normal schoolhouse ever erected in Massachusetts—in the Union—in this hemisphere. It belongs to that class of events which may happen once, but are incapable of being repeated.” He continues with his ever-to-be-remembered statement of faith:

I believe normal schools to be a new instrumentality in the advancement of the race. I believe that, without them, Free Schools themselves would be shorn of their strength and their healing power, and would at length become mere charity schools, and thus die out in fact and in form. Neither the art of printing, nor the trial by jury, nor a free press, nor free suffrage, can long exist, to any beneficial and salutary purpose, without schools for the training of teachers, for, if the character and qualifications of teachers be allowed to degenerate, the Free Schools will become pauper schools, and the free press will become a false and licentious press, and ignorant voters will become venal voters, and through the medium and guise of republican forms, an oligarchy of profligate and flagitious will govern the land; nay, the universal diffusion and ultimate triumph of all-glorious Christianity itself must await the time when knowledge shall be diffused among men through the instrumentality of good schools. Coiled up in this institution, as in a spring, there is a vigor, whose uncoiling may wheel the spheres.<sup>37</sup>

Several years later, in his Twelfth Annual Report, he reaffirms his belief: “Common schools will never prosper without normal schools. As well might we expect to have coats without a tailor, and hats without a hatter, and watches without a watchmaker, and houses without a carpenter or mason, as to have an adequate supply of teachers without normal schools.”

In the early summer of 1845, before the normal school buildings were completed, a new project was under way—the

<sup>37</sup> *Life and Works of Horace Mann*, Vol. V, pages 218-219. Boston, 1891.

county teachers' institute. The first ever held in this country had been conducted by Mr. Barnard in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1839. The institution had been transplanted to the State of New York in 1843, and a number of the larger counties had adopted this aid in preparing teachers. As in so many other instances, Mr. Mann was willing to adopt and adapt a device used elsewhere. Calling attention to the success of the plan in New York, he says: "We have borrowed her system of district school libraries. . . . She has borrowed our system of normal schools. . . . Let us now adopt the system of teachers' institutes, which she has projected."

Again, as in the case of the normal schools, it was private funds which made a beginning possible. Mr. Edmund Dwight, who had been instrumental in founding the normal schools, in the early summer of 1845 gave \$1,000 to pay the expenses of four institutes which were to be held in Massachusetts—at Pittsfield, Fitchburg, Bridgewater, and Chatham. Instructors were provided from the funds donated, and the attendance was limited in each to one hundred teachers. Each regular attendant for the ten days they were in session received two dollars. The first was held at Pittsfield. Governor Briggs, who was much interested, accompanied Mr. Mann who was an instructor and remained throughout most of the session. All the common schools were having vacation and the schoolroom assigned for the meeting was not in order. The Governor borrowed a couple of brooms from a neighbor, and he and the secretary swept, dusted, and put the room in condition for the meeting which more than one hundred attended. How great was the need for supplementing the work of the normal schools is attested by the fact that there were all told about six thousand teachers in Massachusetts and only two or three hundred could be accommodated in all of the normal schools.



Common school conventions had been held whose main purpose was to arouse public attention. The institutes, conducted especially for teachers, added to their qualifications in "means and modes" of instruction. Teachers' associations, organized by Mr. Mann in each county, being in session only two or three days, were limited in their influence. The teachers' institute, on the other hand, gave at least a modicum of training. It met twice a year, spring and autumn, to accommodate summer and winter teachers. Experienced and distinguished instructors led students through actual school routine and classroom exercises and lectured to them. Classes were organized for study and recitation and for mutual improvement. In contrast with more recent institutes which have in many instances furnished more entertainment than instruction, they were truly "little normal schools" in embryonic form.

The success of the venture was immediately apparent. Following Mr. Mann's recommendation, an act was passed by the legislature and approved by Governor Briggs (March 12, 1846), appropriating \$2,500 annually for their support, and they became a permanent feature of the Massachusetts program for improving common-school instruction. The institute was never meant to be more than an auxiliary device to supplement the normal school itself. Just as teachers' associations had been organized and educational classics had been reprinted to spread among teachers the gospel of good schools and to improve their teaching philosophy and techniques, so the institute served numberless persons who either did not have the vision or the funds to secure a longer period of training. Although long since outmoded because superior training opportunities are offered, in its day it was a potent stimulus and demonstrated the need for the normal schools.

Mann's influence in teacher training was not limited to

Massachusetts alone. It was on his recommendation that David P. Page was selected as principal of the first state normal school in New York. Even as far west as Iowa and Minnesota his influence was a potent force in the establishment of teacher-training institutions.

While others preceded him in their emphasis upon the need for better preparation of teachers, Mann was in a strategic position to make the ideas effective in his state. Accordingly, to him, more than to any other person, we owe the present group of normal schools in this country, since other states soon followed Massachusetts in this respect. While others theorized, Mann acted, and under the influence of his guiding hand teacher training became a reality.

## CHAPTER XI

### FRIENDS AND INTIMATES IN BOSTON

AMANN'S measure of enjoyment as well as his influence is determined to a large extent by the friendships which he is able to make. Mr. Mann made friends easily and won deserved popularity. We have already seen that he was elected a state senator, and thereafter president of the senate, soon after he had removed to Boston.

When he first came to Boston, his law partner, Edward G. Loring, himself prominent, introduced him to his friends. Many a Sunday dinner was eaten in Mr. Loring's home. Droll and witty in conversation, brilliant in intellect, gentle and thoughtful in speech, Mann was well received. A Puritan in morals and character, a liberal in politics and religion, he naturally attracted and was attracted to men and women of similar views and tastes. No one was more keenly interested in reform and in humanitarian projects and activities than he. The Bostonians of his day took great interest in idealistic enterprises and had, perhaps, more individuals of high moral worth and liberal tone than any other city in the country. Boston was a city of great enthusiasms in culture and reform. Although a small city of less than fifty thousand souls, more than two thousand were regular attendants at lectures on science and philosophy. Mr. Mann found the intellectual life stimulating and to his liking. He had little to do with the "best society," with its snobbishness and exclusiveness and its enmity against reform and reformers. But he felt at home with those who were laboring

to improve the conditions of humanity, especially of the so-called "lower classes."

While not identified, as a member, with any church, he was a frequent attendant at the Sunday services. "Hearing common sermons" he said "gives my piety the consumption"; common sermons were all too frequent. Two men, however, were exceptions to the general rule. They were Father Taylor and William Ellery Channing, the former a Methodist chaplain at the Seamen's Bethel, the latter a Unitarian.

Father Taylor, variously called "the seamen's apostle," "a sailor among transcendentalists," and the "Booth of the Boston pulpit," wielded immense influence because of his wholesome sincerity and his originality in preaching. Emerson called him "the Shakespeare of the sailor and the poor." To Walt Whitman he appealed as the "one essentially perfect orator," whose fame "was more widespread than that of any Massachusetts author or statesman, for it penetrates every part of the world visited by ships and sailors." Herman Melville made him the original of Father Mapple in "Moby Dick." Harriet Martineau had heard him called "a second, homely Jeremy Taylor." Whitman went to hear him preach. "Soon as he opened his mouth I ceased to pay any attention to church or audience or pictures or lights, or shades; a far more potent charm entirely swayed me. . . . I remember I felt the deepest impression from the old man's prayers, which invariably affected me to tears. Never, on any similar or other occasions, have I heard such impassioned pleading, such human-harassing reproach (like Hamlet to his mother, in the closet). . . . For when Father Taylor preached or prayed, the rhetoric and art, the mere words (which usually play such a big part), seemed altogether to disappear, and the *live feeling* advanced upon you and seized you with a

power before unknown." . . . "Among all the brilliant lights of bar or stage I ever heard in my time. . . . I never had anything in the way of vocal utterance to shake me through and through . . . like those prayers and sermons. . . ." <sup>1</sup> When he died he was mourned by thousands of the poor who had never heard of Emerson, Webster, and other prominent men of the day. Mr. Mann called him "the noblest man I have ever known." When he was ill, Mann raised money among his friends to make a much-needed rest possible.

Mr. Mann's acquaintanceship with Dr. Channing began in 1833, but for eight years Dr. Channing had been watching his career sympathetically. Channing was the outstanding figure among the transcendentalists and intellectuals of Boston, and the acknowledged leader of the Unitarians, who looked upon him as their apostle and prophet. "How lovely, how true, how gloriously progressive" he was, said Mann, who had described him, "on all subjects of philanthropy and ethics . . . half a century in advance of his age." Mr. Mann and he agreed in their views of temperance and slavery, both believing that these questions should not be mixed with politics, but that moral influence should be depended upon to solve the questions connected with them. Like Mann, whose firm supporter and adviser he was, Channing believed that human life on earth is all for education.

But no man influenced Mann's life and thinking more than did George Combe, of Edinburgh, the distinguished Scotch philosopher and phrenologist. About a decade before Mann took up his work as secretary of the Board, a phrenological society had been formed in Scotland with Mr. Combe as editor of its journal. Interest in America had first been awakened when Spurzheim, forerunner of Mr. Combe, had

<sup>1</sup> From Walt Whitman's *Prose Works*, published by David McKay Company, Washington Square, Philadelphia.



come to America to propagate interest in the new philosophy, first appearing in a lecture before the American Institute of Instruction, and later in a series of lectures at Athenaeum Hall, Boston, and at Harvard University. Many prominent men became interested, and the popularity of the doctrines increased by leaps and bounds. Societies were organized to further the cause and courses were given at lyceums, so that almost every one prominent in the intellectual life of America was exposed to its doctrines. When Combe came to this country in 1838, he found the soil well prepared for the seed which he was to sow. For two years he remained, traveling, writing, and lecturing on his favorite theme. "Phrenology was the great object of my visit and my occupation while in the United States," he declared. Much interest was manifested in his lectures. His first series of eighteen, delivered in the Masonic Temple in Boston, was attended on the average by more than three hundred intellectual leaders. Later series followed in other cities with similar interest shown in them. Hundreds attended in New York, Albany, Hartford, New Haven, and Philadelphia. College presidents, professors, students, lawyers, mayors, judges, and governors were to be found in his audiences.

Mr. Mann had already been a reader and admirer of his writings, particularly *The Constitution of Man*,<sup>2</sup> which he estimated as the "greatest book that has been written for centuries," destined to "work the same change in metaphysical science that Lord Bacon wrought in the natural." Mann was delighted to meet the author in person just as his series of lectures in Boston was beginning; he soon became

<sup>2</sup> First published in 1838, this work was to be translated into French, German, Spanish, Swedish, and Italian, and extensively published in all those languages. In America it went through twenty editions in seven years, and with the publication of the twentieth edition, a total of more than 300,000 copies had been sold in different parts of the world.

an ardent and devoted personal follower of this "disciple of truth" whose pronouncements he regarded as oracular. He sought every opportunity to learn of his work; in the spring of 1840 he arranged to travel with him to visit the Middle West—then the West—as far as Ohio and Kentucky. For ten rich weeks Mr. Mann was to have close and intimate contact with the man and his ideas and ideals. Although he was not to see him again, except on a chance meeting in Europe, an intimate, heart-revealing correspondence which began in America was continued across the sea, terminating only with Mr. Combe's death. The letters which were exchanged are a running comment on an interesting educational movement both in England and America.<sup>3</sup> Their friendship was firm and mutual, each writing admiringly of the other and his work. Combe aptly and appreciatively writes of Mann: "He is a delightful companion and friend, and among all the excellent men whom we have met in Boston, none entwined themselves more deeply and closely with our affections than Horace Mann." After listening to Mann lecturing in Boston, he declared it was "a moral and intellectual treat." Mann was equally eloquent in lauding the virtues of his newly acquired friend. After his return from the West, meditating on his association with the great philosopher, he writes: "I have never been acquainted with a mind which handled such great subjects with such ease, and, as it appears to me, with such justness. My journey with him has been to me, a source of great advantage and delight. He has constantly gratified my strongest faculties. . . . In the next century, I have no doubt, he will be looked back upon as the greatest man of the present. . . . Let me, too, labor for something more enduring than my-

<sup>3</sup> Preserved among the *Mann Papers*. Many of MR. MANN'S letters are reprinted in MRS. MANN'S *Life of Horace Mann*.

self.”<sup>4</sup> Later in life he writes to him feelingly of his regard: “There is no man of whom I think so often; there is no man who has done me so much good as you have. I see many of the most valuable truths as I never should have seen them but for you, and all truths better than I should otherwise have done.” On the copyright page of the twentieth edition of Combe’s *The Constitution of Man* Mann is quoted: “I look upon phrenology as the guide of philosophy and the mark of Christianity. Whoever disseminates true phrenology is a public benefactor.” So much was Mann influenced that even his style of writing was modified, and he was teased by his friends because he imitated even the style and language of his revered friend.

The two men complemented each other admirably. Combe was essentially the scientist, the logician, the rationalist who lacked imagination and could only believe what he saw. Mann, not less intellectual, was more emotional and was able to form convictions in realms that the physical senses could not penetrate. Fearing Combe’s views, some saw phrenology undermining religious belief and tending towards materialism. Mann saw just the opposite effect. “I could never discover the slightest ground for this objection” he writes. “Instead of tending to infidelity, I think it tends to fidelity, both to God and to men; and its only semblance to materialism consists in the solid basis which it supplies for natural religion.”<sup>5</sup> They were in accord in their firm belief in the “improvability of man,” a favored doctrine since the days of the French Revolution.

Some students of Mann’s life are puzzled at his conversion to the doctrines of the so-called “science” of phrenology, as his adoption of this now discarded subject seems entirely in-

<sup>4</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Journal*, page 153, entry May 10, 1840.

<sup>5</sup> Letter to a young lawyer of Dansville, New York, July 23, 1852. Reprinted in Dansville paper. On file with *Mann Papers*.

consistent with his other advanced and well-grounded views on social and educational subjects. They find it difficult to see how a man of his brilliant intellect could fall a prey to a belief in such an unsound and discredited theory. The answer is simple enough. Psychology, as now known, was not in existence. Not for years later was real experimental work on the operations of the human mind begun. Phrenology was the psychology of its day, the forerunner of modern psychology. Its adherents advocated the application of science, just then first coming into prominence, to the study of the human mind and took the attitude the "experimental psychologists" take today.

To the uninitiated, furthermore, phrenologists are commonly confused with craniologists, who believe that "bumps" or protuberances of the cranium indicate the location of the mental faculties. The phrenologists did not accept this view, at least not *in toto*. They did believe in localization of the brain's functions (some psychologists still do so); they did believe that mental characteristics could be indicated by a study of face, form, manner, and temperament. Though they were essentially wrong in many of their views, they were the most advanced students of mind in Mann's time.<sup>6</sup>

Their science itself was less important than the educational implications which they drew from it. The essence of their belief was that man, just as in the case of other natural objects, is subject to definite laws of nature; that there is causality, *i.e.*, that mental events follow definite and precise causes which precede them; that, in a word, law dominates the mental and moral world as well as the physical. Finding law applying to body and mind alike, they believed that both must be objects of education and that physical health

<sup>6</sup> Among the many adherents were Thomas H. Gallaudet, Henry Barnard, George B. Emerson, Cyrus Pierce, and later William T. Harris and Henry Ward Beecher.

is a prerequisite to successful mental and moral life. They believed that feelings, purposes, and attitudes were important factors in education, which were to be cultivated directly. Environmental factors were believed to be of great importance in human development. According to their doctrine man was not "determined," not "doomed" from his birth, but was subject to change through education and by his own activities. They believed thoroughly in the theory of mental discipline. They were leaders in advocating schools and education, they were "educational reformers" attempting to make education scientific. They opposed the theory, current at the time, that man was naturally depraved, weak, and incapable of any good, and supported instead the doctrine that he has capacity for civilization and that the race might be improved by conscious effort.

Although Mann's adoption of these theories sometimes led him into educational bogs, as in the instance when he undervalues the importance of physiology in his sixth report, thereby bringing ridicule on his head, on the other hand they were the background against which his educational theories were projected. Optimistic in his hope for democracy and in the school as an agent for preparing future citizens, he persisted with diligent and sublime faith in these views which were at the foundation of his educational contributions. He had great faith—in God, in man, in democracy, and in the school as a means by which the best in man might be realized. No man was more responsible for the views of these and later years than George Combe.

There is little wonder that Samuel Gridley Howe was also enshrined in Mann's heart as an intimate. Howe was a fellow student at Brown, where he was known for his pranks and spirit of fun. After he had studied medicine at Harvard, he enlisted as a soldier in Greece. Reform was in his blood.



Returning to America in 1832, he founded the Institution for the Blind, securing a subsidy for it from the legislature the next year, while Mann was a member of the lawmaking body. While Mann was furthering the care of the insane, Howe was exerting himself on behalf of the blind. In 1837, the identical year in which Mann began his duties as secretary, Howe became widely known for his marvelous pioneer work for the blind with Laura Bridgman as his most prominent pupil. The institution which he fathered became the first in rank of its kind in this country, if not in the world; John G. Whittier dubbed its superintendent "The Cadmus of the Blind." Let his daughter tell of his association with Mann: "In the late thirties, my father first met the two men who were to be through many years his closest friends and fellow laborers: Charles Sumner and Horace Mann. . . . My father sympathized heartily with their aims, especially with those of Mann, which marched so close beside his own. . . . He and Mann were seen working together for common schools, for normal schools, for the insane, for all who needed help." <sup>7</sup> Like Mann he was an earnest devotee of Combe, stating openly that he owed all his success in educating the blind to phrenological principles. Like Mann, too, he looked upon *The Constitution of Man* as one of the greatest products of human intelligence. Sumner introduced him to Julia Ward, beautiful heiress of New York City, member of the city's best society, who was to become his wife and to achieve fame as the author of *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*. After their marriage they settled in an unfashionable suburb near his institute. They made many friends and learned to know the most radical thinkers, the boldest reformers, and the best intellects in the city of Boston, welcoming at their threshold

<sup>7</sup> RICHARDS, LAURA E.—*Letters and Journals of Samuel Gridley Howe*, Vol. II, page 86. L. C. Page and Company, Boston, 1909. Used by permission.

and entertaining Edwin Booth, Holmes, Longfellow, Emerson, Theodore Parker, William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, John Brown, Charles Sumner and other apostles of reform and of transcendental philosophy. Although Mann was more moderate in his anti-slavery views than Howe, in their general outlook and attitude towards the problems of the day they were in complete sympathy. In Mann's numerous bitter struggles Howe could be depended upon to wield sturdy blows in his defense and to afford him needed inspiration and encouragement.

Another friend who rendered inestimable service, both in creating the Board of Education and in supporting its secretary, was George B. Emerson, first cousin of Ralph Waldo Emerson. A graduate of Harvard, where he was a classmate of George Bancroft, Caleb Cushing, and S. J. May, and where Edward Everett was his tutor, he taught in several Boston schools. He had been a leader in organizing the American Institute of Instruction. A pupil and friend of Governor Everett's, he labored valiantly to secure legislation establishing the Board and he urged Mann to become its secretary. He was editor *pro tem* of *The Common School Journal* during Mann's absence in Europe, and when the *Seventh Annual Report* was under attack, he came to his friend's assistance with a brilliant pamphlet supporting him and his policies.

There were many other friends and acquaintances. Space forbids mention, much less description of them. Among the host were George S. Hilliard, law partner of Charles Sumner; Robert C. Waterston, so largely instrumental in securing subscriptions for the new normal school buildings; Jared Sparks, the historian; Josiah Quincy, mayor of Boston; Rufus Choate, renowned attorney; John G. Whittier, poet of freedom and champion of professional education; and

Samuel Downer, prominent radical and free-soil industrialist. His intimates were found in all walks of life.

It has already been mentioned that when Mann first came to Boston he boarded at the house of James Freeman Clarke's mother. It was here that he first met the three Peabody sisters—a significant occurrence for him, as it later proved, for one of them was to become his second wife.

The Peabodys, who were descendants from old Massachusetts stock, were respected citizens of Salem, where several generations of the family had resided. The father was a dentist, the mother had been a teacher. They lived in the "Dr. Grimshawe House" adjoining Charter Street Burying Ground, a house to be immortalized by Nathaniel Hawthorne in his romance, *Dr. Grimshawe's Secret*, in which the father, Nathaniel Peabody, was the prototype of the principal character. The family was often in straitened circumstances, causing them to move frequently. There were six children, three sons—but one of whom lived to maturity—and three daughters, Elizabeth, Mary, and Sophia. It was the daughters who were to bring fame to the family. As a whole, the family was inclined to the newer attitudes in religion.

The religious controversies that ended in changing all the old Puritan churches of Boston and Salem from Calvinism to Liberal and Unitarian Christianity were raging in 1818, and dividing all families. Some of our relatives became Calvinists; our own family, and especially our mother, who was very devout, remained Liberal.<sup>8</sup>

They were tremendously interested in the awakening surge of reform rising over the country and were to have a large

<sup>8</sup> From a résumé of the family history by Miss Elizabeth Peabody, quoted in Julian Hawthorne's *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*. Quoted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, the publishers.

share in it. The young women were members of a Salem group with purposes and aims similar to those of the Transcendental Club of Boston. It was at one of these meetings that Nathaniel Hawthorne was introduced to Sophia, his future wife.

Elizabeth, the oldest, had been a teacher since she was sixteen years of age. When Mann first came to Boston to engage in the practice of law, he boarded at Mrs. Clarke's. Elizabeth and her sisters were boarding at the same home. At the time she was teaching in the Temple School opened recently under the direction of Amos Bronson Alcott, the "American Pestalozzi." The new school had attracted the interest of men of prominence like Emerson and Channing. Elizabeth first became acquainted with Mann in a conversation in which she told him of a lesson which she had prepared for teaching. His comment was: "This is an uncommon style of school teaching." She had been the sole teacher of her two younger sisters: Mary, who was to become the wife of Horace Mann; and Sophia, who was wedded to Nathaniel Hawthorne. Elizabeth had studied Greek under Emerson, the Sage of Concord, and for years was associated with Rev. Channing as his secretary and literary assistant. She was to become famed as the first to introduce a public kindergarten in the United States. At the time Mann first learned to know her, she was much concerned with progressive educational and social measures.

After the death of her invalid brother in 1840, the family took up a Boston residence at 13 West Street. In this house the father managed a drug store, while Mrs. Peabody and Elizabeth conducted a circulating library of foreign books and a bookshop for the sale of French and German books in the front parlor. The sale of books was probably small, but conveniently located as it was, the shop was a meeting place

for many of the intellectuals of the city and its suburbs. It became the accepted, though unofficial, center of the Transcendental Club which held its meetings on the lower floor of the house. It was here that Margaret Fuller held her weekly "conversations"; the visitor dropping in might find Amos Bronson Alcott, Henry Thoreau, James Freeman Clarke, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Lydia Maria Child, James Russell Lowell, George Ripley, and other leaders at Brook Farm. Horace Mann was a frequent visitor. Here Elizabeth published Hawthorne's books for children, such as the *Twice Told Tales*, and edited and published the *Dial*, official organ of the transcendentalist movement of which she was an enthusiastic member. The transcendentalist was first and foremost a reformer. Here were discussed women's rights, abolition, education. Those who met here believed in the inherent worth of man and in possibilities for development. They had faith in the capacities of every boy and girl and in the ability of each to progress. They were earnest enthusiasts for "emancipated thought," which they believed, if given opportunity, would solve the pressing problems of the day. By her personal contacts in the bookstore and in her capacity as editor of the *Dial*, Elizabeth, as well as her sisters, kept in touch with all the leading liberal and radical thinkers of the period.

When Hawthorne came to Boston to fill a position at the Custom House, he continued his acquaintanceship with the family, begun at Salem, and he was often in their home as a member of the transcendentalist group and as a guest. It was through this influence that he became enamored of the theories of Mr. Ripley, the founder of Brook Farm, and invested his savings in the new project. After living at the farm for a short period, thoroughly disillusioned, he withdrew and was soon afterwards married to Sophia Peabody,



with whom, in 1842, he went to live in the Old Manse at Concord.

Horace Mann, quite in sympathy if not in complete accord with the general principles of the transcendental group, also found their society congenial. He had formed an attachment for Mary, the second daughter, soon after meeting Elizabeth. Mary, like Elizabeth, had been a teacher. She was a woman of keen intellect, of high moral qualities, and was



*Courtesy Antioch College*

MRS. MARY PEABODY MANN  
HORACE MANN'S SECOND WIFE

intent upon the amelioration of the condition of the race through education. She, too, was a transcendentalist in belief. She was a constant source of inspiration and helpfulness to Mann in his arduous and exacting labors. Thoroughly harmonious with him in her views concerning the subjects nearest his heart, she gave him the encouragement so sorely needed as opposition mounted against his cherished plans. In March, 1843, Mann entered in his personal journal a notation that he had become engaged to Mary Tyler Pea-

body, and that he was projecting a journey to Europe on the same steamer with Dr. Howe and desired to take his bride along. Accordingly on May 1, 1843, they were married and on the same day set sail from Boston on the *Britannia*, in company with Dr. and Mrs. Howe, who were themselves married only a few days before.

It is important to note that Mann's closest friends were connected with the reform group. Their devotion to causes matched his own intensity. His thinking and attitudes on social and educational problems were in large part colored by his associations. His conception of education was larger and truer because of his constant friendship with leaders in social reform. Education to him became a consuming passion, a cause for which he was willing to sacrifice himself. Through it he saw the strong citadels of ignorance crumble and an enlightened citizenry lift the race to greater and nobler achievements. To him, it was the *cause of causes*, the *work of works*.

For six long and exacting years Mann had carried the banner of education before the people. To inform himself he had read everything possible on his subject and had visited many schools. In 1840, on a tour of more than three thousand miles, he had traveled through the West, visiting New York, Baltimore, Washington, Wheeling, and Cincinnati. He had met Nathan Guilford, author of the school system of Ohio. Except for this extended trip, he had been ceaselessly engaged in work for the Board. Burning with enthusiasm which consumed his meager vitality, harassed by bitter opposition, it is little wonder that he felt his strength ebbing low and his body in dire need of recuperation.

He had asked the Board of Education to allow him to visit schools in Europe, principally in Germany, for a six months period at his own expense. He felt that he could do

more for the schools, were he to have the breadth of information which could be secured only by first-hand contact with the educational systems of other lands. It may be that he was moved by the fact that most of the educational leaders of the time had had this much-coveted opportunity for first-hand study. The progress already made seemed secure. Assaults upon the schools had been repulsed and the cause stood high in public esteem. The normal schools were well under way. His health had been seriously undermined, and a change seemed the only means to quiet his fevered activity. He had exhausted his nervous reserves, and in the words of Dr. Howe his brain "went of itself." The Board granted his request. With his wife he sailed for Europe in furtherance of his educational mission, his friends bidding him Godspeed in the hope that he would return refreshed and rested after his months of new scenes and new experiences.

## CHAPTER XII

### EUROPE—SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT— OPPOSITION

A COLD, tempestuous crossing of the Atlantic, two weeks by packet ship, did not provide a situation conducive to pleasure. After his arrival in England, Mann immediately proceeded to an investigation of the schools. Although the trip was undertaken to restore failing health, the half year's leave of absence served the purposes of education more than of recreation. So completely was he engrossed with educational labors and investigations that he had little time for mere sight-seeing and the customary journeys of the traveler. Every day was packed full. From seven in the morning until five at night he visited schools, prisons, and asylums and conferred with prominent men interested in education and reform; many of his free evenings were spent in perusing descriptive documents to enable him to understand better what he saw. Always mindful of his mission, always on the alert to discover something useful for his beloved schools, always sensitively aware of the tremendous import of what he saw and reported for the future of America, it was little wonder that he refrained from anything and everything which would hinder his high purpose of learning whatever would be helpful in building the schools of his native country. He had already visited almost all of the states in America to learn what he could of the schools and to take home for adoption any practices which he found superior.

His interests were too broad to allow him to confine his

attention exclusively to the common schools. His journal records his impressions of visits to schools for epileptics, the deaf and dumb, the blind, the incorrigible, the orphaned, and the poor, as well as those to common schools, secondary schools, colleges, and universities. His experience as a member of the managing board of the Worcester Hospital for the Insane had given him particular interest in Seguin's schools for idiots. He took great pains to report on the condition of schoolhouses. His six years in the secretaryship had convinced him that, with many of the problems solved or well on their way to solution, the paramount reform still needed was in the field of moral and religious instruction. His complete support of a definite program of tutelage in moral and religious fields equaled in intensity his opposition to any form of sectarianism in the schools. But while his writings reveal foci of interest, no subject connected with schools lay without the range of his vigorous and penetrating mind.

As was said in a preceding chapter, his itinerary took him in order to England, Ireland, and Scotland, and Germany, Holland, and France. Germany was then the center of the teacher-training movement, and its common school system was doubtless the best in the world. From all countries scholars were going to Germany as a Mecca to receive inspiration and instruction, and to return to their own countries to recommend that the Prussian system be adopted. The Prussian influence had spread to America. It is little wonder that Mann spent more than two months in German schools, visiting Hamburg, Berlin, Potsdam, Halle, Weissenfels, Leipsic, Dresden, Erfurt, Weimar, Eisenach, Frankfort, Baden, and the principal cities of the Rhenish provinces. He ranked Prussia as having the best school system he saw, followed in order by Saxony, the western and southwestern



states of Germany, Holland and Scotland, Ireland, France, Belgium, and England. He found Prussia decidedly the best of them all, the tone of the educational systems becoming gradually poorer as he approached the Rhine, and much poorer in Nassau, Hesse, Darmstadt, and Baden, and the cities of Cologne, Coblenz, and Dusseldorf. England he found poorest of all.

Upon his return his observations were carefully narrated in his famous *Seventh Annual Report*, made famous more by the storm of controversy aroused by it than by the importance of its contribution. In the course of five months of inspecting schools he found much to admire and considerable to condemn. Contrasting types of organization and procedure were found. Some states had strong national systems with each detail specifically regulated by law; others had not even the semblance of a system. In some countries corporal punishment was used liberally and freely, while in others scarcely a blow had been struck for a quarter century. Some teachers enriched instruction with explanation and illustration, while others demanded sheer verbal memory. In certain respects Massachusetts schools were found superior to the European; in others, the reverse was true. More than half the pages of the report were given over to a description and laudation of the Prussian system and methods.

He was greatly disappointed in the general state of the schools in Great Britain as to both organization and the public's attitude. To him, the private school systems were iniquitous because the minority, the wealthier classes, maintaining excellent schools for their own children, either did not concern themselves with giving educational opportunity to the great majority, the neglected poorer classes, or actively opposed support of public schools. A "partial" system of schools, such as this, ministering only to the needs of the

minority, was diametrically opposed to providing free universal schools, because of the supposed greater expense and because private teachers fought vigorously against giving up what they considered their vested rights.

Mann, with his implicit belief in democracy, could not feel at home under any arrangement of school or society in which the "under dog" was not given an opportunity. Without some common meeting ground where the people could be fused into a compact group, democracy itself was endangered. Because newspapers, periodicals, political parties, and religious groups tend to divide and are often the organs through which factions can support their particular views, he saw no other hope for securing the unity of the people than in the common school, attended by the children of all the people. To his mind it, and it alone, was the one institution which could have for its sole motive the search for truth, irrespective of sect, party, or faction. In the midst of the legislative conflict, a few years before, he had written his sublime declaration of faith in the common school:

The Common School is the institution which can receive and train up children in the elements of all good knowledge, and of virtue, before they are subjected to the alienating competitions of life. This institution is the greatest discovery ever made by man;—we repeat it, *The Common School is the greatest discovery ever made by man*. In two grand characteristic attributes, it is super-eminent over all others:—first, in its universality;—for it is capacious enough to receive and cherish in its parental bosom every child that comes into the world; second, in the timeliness of the aid it proffers;—its early, seasonable supplies of counsel and guidance, making security antedate danger. Other social organizations are curative and remedial; this is a preventive and an antidote; they come to heal diseases and wounds; this to make the physical and moral frame invulnerable to them. Let the Common School be expanded to its capabilities, let it be worked with the efficiency of which it is susceptible, and nine-tenths of the crimes

in the penal code would become obsolete; the long catalogue of human ills would be abridged; men would walk more safely by day; every pillow would be more inviolable by night; property, life and character held by a stronger tenure; all rational hopes respecting the future brightened.<sup>1</sup>

He had seen revolutionary changes occurring in society. Democracy was in the making. Education and democracy were, to him, correlatives. One could not exist without the other. In commenting on the legislations of 1842, which established district school libraries and normal schools on a firm basis, his fundamental social point of view is clearly and forcefully revealed:

Mankind are rapidly passing through a transition state. The idea and feeling that the world was made, and life given, for the happiness of all, and not for the ambition, or pride, or luxury, of one, or of a few, are pouring in, like a resistless tide, upon the minds of men, and are effecting a universal revolution in human affairs. Governments, laws, social usages, are rapidly dissolving, and recombining in new forms. The axiom which holds the highest welfare of all the recipients of human existence to be the end and aim of that existence, is the theoretical foundation of all the governments of this Union; it has already modified all the old despotisms of Europe, and has obtained a foothold on the hitherto inaccessible shores of Asia and Africa, and the islands of the sea. A new phrase,—the people,—is becoming incorporated into all languages and laws; and the correlative idea of human rights is evolving, and casting off old institutions and customs, as the expanding body bursts and casts away the narrow and worn-out garments of childhood. . . . That government will be deemed faithless to one of its highest trusts which endows institutions to cultivate genius and knowledge in a few, while it spurns the millions from its protecting care. The contrast will not redound to the honor, but to the infamy, of any state or kingdom which displays

<sup>1</sup> *The Common School Journal*, Vol. III, page 15, January 1, 1841. Introduction.

a few gems of art or intellect amid the ebon blackness of national ignorance.<sup>2</sup>

In England he had visited Hume, Carlyle, and Cobden to exchange views on subjects of common interest. The contrast he saw between conditions in the upper and lower strata of society sickened his heart and vivified and reaffirmed his belief in democracy. Only a stone's throw from the splendor of Westminster Abbey he found the squalid, foul, odorous habitations of the poor. With Charles Dickens, then in the forefront of social reform, and the Howes he went to Bridewell prison. Every now and then a prisoner, exhausted, would sink to his knees on the treadmill then still in use. For food at the noonday meal there was only bread and soup. Dickens, revolting at the sight, exclaimed: "My God! If a woman thinks her son may come to this, I don't blame her if she strangles him in infancy!"<sup>3</sup> Commenting on the "hopeless vice" found there, Mann exclaims: "There are certain quarters in London where children are born, educated, trained to go to Bridewell, to the prisons, to Australia, or to be hanged as much and as certainly, as poultry is raised to be eaten."<sup>4</sup>

Going on to Scotland he was most impressed with the teaching methods he saw. He was amazed at the activity of children, and the buzz and physical movement in the schools led him to declare that, compared with them, the most active schools in the United States would be almost "dormitories." He reported seeing schools where for two hours the recitation would move along with such enthusiasm and such fever heat

<sup>2</sup> *Life and Works of Horace Mann*, Vol. V, pages 204-205. Boston, 1891. Quoted from *The Common School Journal*.

<sup>3</sup> HOWE, JULIA WARD—*Reminiscences*, page 108. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1891. Used by permission.

<sup>4</sup> *Journal*, June 5, 1843. Unpaged. *Mann Papers*.

that at its close both teacher and pupil would be "covered with perspiration, as though they had been contending in a race or ring."

Prussia had been a leading objective of his quest. He was already familiar with the schools of this well-known German state through the reports of such men as Cousin, Bache, and Stowe. Now he could observe for himself at first hand. In fundamental principles he believed the schools of the United States superior to any in Europe, because they were free to all and open on an equal basis to rich and poor alike. Prussia excelled in classifying pupils and in providing classrooms for teaching the different grades. In methods of teaching and in provision for seminaries for teachers, too, Prussia set a standard for the world. Summarizing six weeks of class visiting in Prussia and Saxony, he was deeply impressed with three points of excellence: (1) During the whole time he had never seen a teacher with a book in his hand, the instruction being predominantly oral; (2) he never saw a teacher sitting down to conduct a recitation; and (3) he never saw a child punished for misconduct or a child in tears either because he had been punished or was anticipating punishment. These conditions, so much at variance with those of his own state, he attributed to the professional training which was given to teachers at the normal schools and to the excellent system of school inspection. His investigations on the subjects of corporal punishment and emulation convinced him that the practices of the European schools were far superior to our own.

In the whole field of moral and religious instruction he found the schools of America far ahead of Europe. Abroad he discovered that religion was used for political purposes "not to enthrone a Deity in the heavens, but a king over a state." Accordingly he returned "with a more exalted



opinion" and a greater "heartfelt attachment" for religion as conceived in America.

In social conditions as well, the balance tipped decidedly towards the American situation which, though not perfect, still was decidedly better than what he found abroad. As a result of the division into economic and social classes, not half the population could read or write; not one third were adequately housed; not one in five hundred shared in making the laws under which he had to live. Immorality was a concomitant of poverty. In 1836 almost ten thousand Paris births were illegitimate, a third of all. One of each thirteen children born in all France was an illegitimate child. In Europe, by inequitable laws and institutions, wealth was taken from the producer to be used for the luxury of a few favored persons. Let Mann himself describe the intolerable economic situation:

Of *production*, there is no end; of distribution, there is no beginning. Nine hundred and ninety-nine children of the same common Father, suffer from destitution, that the thousandth may revel in superfluities. A thousand cottages shrink in meanness and want, to swell the dimensions of a single palace. The tables of a thousand families of the industrious poor waste away into drought and barrenness, that one board may be laden with surfeits. As yet, the great truth has scarcely dawned upon the mind of the theorist or speculator—that the political application of doing as we would be done by is, to give every man entire equality before the law, and then to leave his fortunes and his success to depend upon his own exertions.<sup>5</sup>

The foregoing observations and conditions he set forth in the *Seventh Annual Report* the final sections of which contrast the democratic tradition of America with the despotic heritage in Europe, and the principle is reasserted that there

<sup>5</sup> *Seventh Annual Report*, quoted in *The Common School Journal*, Vol. VI, pages 185-188.

can be no vital democratic life without a firm basis in education: "*In a republic, ignorance is a crime. . . . Private immorality is not less an opprobrium to the state than is guilt in the perpetrator.*"

The document, presented to the Board at the beginning of the year, was issued to the public in the following spring. Because of the exigencies of the situation it had to be prepared hastily under unfavorable mental and physical conditions. The two-weeks' voyage back to America was "one of the worst passages that have been experienced since St. Paul's shipwreck." During the whole time Mann went almost without food and with little sleep. The result was lowered vitality and nervous irritability. Swamped with overwork he had written to a physician friend: "Can you do anything for a brain that has not slept for three weeks?" Honored abroad it seemed that his own state should appreciate his abilities and his Herculean labors in the field of education. His former reports together with his personal visits had made him a world character in educational progress and reform. It was natural for him to suppose that his views would be sought eagerly at home. And so they were! The first reaction to the report was favorable and enthusiastic. A newly elected governor favorable to Mann and his cause had just succeeded to the chair, Governor George N. Briggs, who in his address to the two houses of the legislature <sup>6</sup> cited the improvements made in the qualifications of teachers, in government, school-houses, libraries, and attendance. He took great pains to commend the normal schools, saying of them: "Of the ultimate success of the plan in perfecting the character of teachers and improving the whole system of popular education, wherever it may be thoroughly tested, I cannot entertain a doubt." Edward Everett, minister to London, sent a

<sup>6</sup> *Senate Document No. 2, 1844, January 10, 1844.*

compliment from one of the highest educational sources in England and requested several copies of the report; Combe thought the descriptions of Scotch schools so lifelike as to have been drawn from life itself; Woodbridge read the document with great interest and extended his personal thanks for the great impetus which it gave to education; and the London *Athenaeum*, usually hostile to everything American, published a complimentary review. The German and English governments reprinted it for distribution in their respective countries. But soon criticism began to come to Mann's ears. Writing to a friend he comments upon the unusual favor with which the report was received by the public, but adds the significant words: "but there are owls, who, to adapt the world to their own eyes, would always keep the sun from rising." Although most teachers were stimulated to improve by the report, others were offended, not so much by the language, as by the implications of the document. It was not long before the gentle ground swell was to become a roar. The dormant opposition became lively and open, with the publication of the report as the occasion rather than the cause of hostility. From 1840 to 1844, the governors had been neutral, if not unfriendly, to the Board, and it was during these years that political attacks upon its program had been most aggressive and pronounced; but before Mann had sailed for Europe these had been successfully repulsed. From the beginning there had been opposition on the part of business and private interests who looked with disfavor on Mann's advanced views. Publishers of textbooks were aggrieved because his policy of reducing the number of textbooks destroyed their markets. The "rum sellers" had been alienated by his temperance sympathies and activities.

The dissatisfaction had not come from the outside alone. There had also been opposition from the educational forces

themselves. On the whole the academies had never been friendly to the movement for common schools. Colleges and universities had taken little part in the reform, and were generally hostile to normal schools and public high schools. A much more aristocratic and exclusive group than the higher institutions of today, they had little in common with a theory which aimed at universal education except in the merest rudiments. Some individuals had been disappointed that Mr. Carter was not given the secretaryship. Added to these factors creating distrust and hostility, there was the traditional complacency of the teaching group. Governors, legislators, and public orators had been accustomed to laud the schools as Massachusetts' great heritage and unwittingly had increased the smugness already felt by the teachers in a Commonwealth long a distinguished leader in national affairs. Nowhere was local pride higher than in Boston, a city whose citizens were entirely cognizant of her supremacy as the country's leading cultural center. Her teachers felt themselves particularly aggrieved by what, to them, was a challenge to their social and educational positions. They were well-educated men, many of whom were graduates of Harvard and other leading colleges. They had undoubted ability and were men of character and importance in the city, having as their pupils the children of the wealthy and influential. Their schools had been praised as among the best. Although Mann had fully recognized the excellences of the Massachusetts schools so far as the democratic philosophy on which they were founded was concerned, he was exceedingly critical of the prevailing methods of teaching and administration. In his earlier reports and addresses he had said much of "incompetent teachers," "ignorance of teachers," "depressed state of the common schools," "schools . . . under a sleepy supervision," and of teachers "deeply and widely deficient"

in knowledge of the human mind and of methods of procedure. He had followed these strictures with the sweeping declaration "that the common school system of Massachusetts had fallen into a state of general unsoundness and debility" by the time he became secretary.<sup>7</sup> In his foreign travels Mann had been especially pleased with the Prussian schools, and of all that he saw the methods of teaching impressed him most. His enthusiastic account of the Prussian system, by implication even if not by direct word, placed the teachers of his own state in an uncomfortable comparative position and tended to undermine them in the estimation of parents and the public. At least so they believed.

Already rankling with anger under the assaults which Mann had made on poor teaching and incensed by his continual inference that teachers prepared in normal schools were superior to those not so trained, the masters decided to do open battle with this champion of innovation and reform who was upsetting educational traditions. In a well-planned document of one hundred and forty-four pages, almost equal in size to the report itself, the *Remarks*<sup>8</sup> were sent forth to "correct erroneous impressions," and to rebuild the sentiment for schools which they had found so sadly undermined by the secretary's thrusts. Thirty-one of the masters had organized a Principals' Association and appointed a committee to prepare a defense. It was read before the Association, section by section, and ordered printed. It appeared, the preface signed by the thirty-one, who, however much they might differ on minor points, declared they were a unit in their general motive of serving the public by concerted action. It is impossible to sketch more than the merest outline of the argument here. Each of four divisions

<sup>7</sup> *Remarks on the Seventh Annual Report of the Hon. Horace Mann, Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education*, page 10. Boston, 1844.

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*



came from a different pen. A paean of praise for the schools as they had been founded and as they were preserved from the days of the Pilgrim Fathers was calculated to secure a ready and sympathetic hearing from the public. The establishment of the Board itself bore witness to the fact that the cause was never in higher repute and was "*never more prosperous than at the time the Board of Education was formed.*" The friends of the common school, they asserted, had desired *improvement*, rather than *revolution*, which was the apparent policy of the secretary. Many short-lived fads had come and gone, one of the most recent being phrenology, a theory "rejecting all fear, emulation, and punishments." The normal schools, they continued, claimed entirely too much for their work with their students; though their principals might be excellent scholars, they lacked practical experience in teaching public schools. The age-old argument of the supremacy of subject matter over methods was invoked. It was asserted that Mann, Howe, Emerson, and Cyrus Pierce "patted each other on the back" praising one another and their respective accomplishments. On the other hand they declared that Mann had not only neglected to extend warm sympathy to the public school teachers; he had condemned and disparaged their work, although "It is not known that he had ever given much attention to the common school system, or that he had been in any way very active in the great cause of common schools, before his appointment as secretary of the Board." <sup>9</sup>

In contrast with the peevish and petulant tone of the first division of the pamphlet, the other three are milder in content and tone. The second discusses the Prussian instruction. As "practical educators" the masters believed that Mann had spent too little time in Prussia to judge objectively and

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.* Page 20.

accurately and to evaluate the teaching practices he professed to describe. For this reason he was overenthusiastic about their excellences and unaware of their deficiencies. The oral teaching which he had approved was calculated to arouse interest, they admitted, but at the expense of "forming the habit of independent and individual effort" which is the basis of successful study. Mr. Mann had argued against the teacher's slavery to the textbook. The masters rose to its stout defense as an instrument of education. Part two closes with a eulogy of experience as contrasted with theories, and with a sharp thrust at "those *imaginative* educators, who would substitute the pleasing fictions of speculation, for the sound and sober dictates of reason."

The third division concerns the *new method*, that is, the *word method* of learning to read. Thoroughly agreeing with Miss Peabody, now his wife, that the word method was superior, Mann had supported this view even before he went abroad, where he found it confirmed by his observations. An involved argument states the masters' objections to this theory. At this stage of the development of education, it would be tiresome to repeat the labored and often specious reasoning. Particularly the masters feared Mr. Mann's "pleasure promoting principle" in the relationship of pupil and teacher, "that of affection first, and then duty." To them, "duty should come first, and pleasure should grow out of the discharge of it." The Boston schoolmasters, true to their Puritan tradition, were not ready to do homage to the modern theory of pleasure and satisfaction as a *sine qua non* of learning.

The fourth and last division attacks the much-discussed question of school discipline and corporal punishment. At this distance from the events, it seems strange that there should have been such a furore over a subject on which there

is so much general agreement today. But in that day teachers in general depended to a much greater degree upon the fear motive than at present. The religious tenets of the prevailing portion of the population supported them in their views. To them it was not merely a question of school procedure, but of conflicting philosophies of life. So generally accepted was the practice in colonial days that it had even been the custom at Harvard for the president to inflict corporal punishment upon unruly students. But a softening of feeling and a modification of views held by the public was slowly effecting a change, although in Mann's time there was still sharp difference of opinion. Thomas Jefferson had declared himself against it. In February, 1838, Barnard had lectured before the primary teachers of Boston urging strict curtailment of the practice and offended several of the teachers present with his advanced views.<sup>10</sup> Several months before Mann became secretary, a petition had been presented to the school committee of Boston, urging discontinuance of corporal punishment in the case of girls. Although negative action was taken on the petition at the time, a resolution prevailed "to strictly enjoin upon the several instructors of the public schools never to make use of corporal punishment until every other means of influencing the pupil shall have failed."<sup>11</sup> To avoid future abuses the committee decided, beginning the next year, to require that punishments be given in the presence of all of the teachers of the school and that a record of each be kept. Just a few months before the *Remarks* appeared, masters and teachers were instructed to keep a memorandum of all cases of corporal punishment and to report them quarterly to the examining committee. Although the Boston School Committee did not believe that such

<sup>10</sup> *Journal*, February 17, 1838, page 74. *Mann Papers*.

<sup>11</sup> *Minutes, School Committee of the City of Boston*. Original on file at the Administration Office of the Boston City Schools.

punishments could be dispensed with, they thought the number of cases could be diminished by stronger appeals to the higher motives. This was essentially Mann's position. Much as he might deplore its administration as theoretically unwise, he had always taken the view that, under the conditions prevailing and with the teachers available, it would be necessary to allow teachers permission to inflict the penalty as a last resort. In one of his lectures before school conventions in the state (1840) his subject had been School Punishments; in summarizing he had said: ". . . in the present state of society, and with our present inexperienced and untrained corps of teachers, punishment, and even corporal punishment, cannot be dispensed with, by all teachers, in all schools, and with regard to all scholars." But he did believe that "where a school is well conducted, the minimum of punishment shows the maximum of qualifications." But then, as in his *Seventh Report*, he did urge the "idea of intelligent, gentlemanly teachers; of a mind-expanding education; of children governed by moral means; of more teaching and less flogging." After observing the schools of the various countries of Europe the conclusion to which he had come was not changed: "At all times and in all countries, the rule is the same; the punishment of scholars is the *complement* of the proper treatment of children by parents in the home and the competency of the teacher in school. Where there is less on one side of the question, there must be more on the other."<sup>12</sup> The masters, although granting that the power of punishment might be abused, believed that more than a mere school theory was at stake. To them, *authority* was prerequisite to school discipline. It was the basis of all government and the "corner-stone of all order";

<sup>12</sup> *Seventh Annual Report*. From *Common School Journal*, June 1, 1844, Vol. VI, page 173.

it was the teacher's duty to give the child training in obedience, and to beware of the blandishments of mere persuasion and kindness. In a day of authority, authority was to be exerted as a principle and as a virtue in itself, rather than as a means to the control of a class or school. So the argument closed.

It was not to be expected that Mann would receive this new attack in supine silence. Two months after the pamphlet appeared, his reply, composed of one hundred and seventy-six pages, returned blow for blow. He refutes the idea that the Boston schoolmasters are more practical than others, saying that many of them are mere freshmen in the work. He cites his own work in behalf of education before he was officially connected with the Board, as teacher in common schools, tutor in college, member of school committees, writer on education, and close student of the subject. He vigorously defends the Prussian mode of instruction, although on some points the defense sounds more like a lawyer's quibble than a dignified account of the facts. As for the word method of teaching reading, he declares it has been in actual use in Boston for at least seven years. On the subject of corporal punishment, too, the issue is clearly drawn. The masters recognized four cornerstones of school discipline: *authority, force, fear, pain!* Against such a regime of power, violence, terror, and suffering he proposed *duty, affection, love of knowledge, and love of truth*. In the earlier pages, keenly hurt by the attacks, Mann had written in a restrained tone, but as he approached the more fundamental questions near the close, he marshalled bitter and biting invective against those daring to oppose his most cherished principles. Conceding the necessity of corporal punishment as the last resort, he flings defiance at all who consider it, not merely as a



device for conducting a school, but as an expression of a fundamental philosophy of life.

His *Reply* concludes its argument with a recital of the causes of opposition to him and his office—repairing and building of schoolhouses, reduction in the number of textbooks, establishment of school libraries, replacement of poor teachers by better ones, opposition of private-school teachers, political rivalry, and sectarian bigotry. With injured feelings and deep grief that his ardent and well-meant endeavors were received with so little appreciation, he calls attention to his strenuous duties, meager compensation, and neglected office, and reaffirms his motive in accepting the secretaryship. He invites his antagonists to argue with results rather than words so that the cause of education will not suffer.

Meanwhile there had appeared from the pen of George B. Emerson a pamphlet<sup>13</sup> supporting the secretary and refuting the arguments of the Thirty-one. That Mann was not expert in all departments of teaching is freely admitted. That the secretary's view on corporal punishment is correct is substantiated by a fair consideration of his position. That teachers and teaching should be and could be much improved is attested by the statements which school committees make in their school returns. Emerson emphatically dissents from the opinion that it would have been better to have had a "practical school man" appointed to the secretaryship, believing that someone alien to the work itself could see it with a more impartial eye. "Such reports upon the subject of education," he declares, "have never before been made. Such an impulse to the cause has never before been given." The cause itself will continue in spite of party spirit, bigotry,

<sup>13</sup> *Observations on a Pamphlet, Entitled "Remarks on the Seventh Annual Report of the Honorable Horace Mann, Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education."* Boston, 1844.

and opposition, he concludes; for if Mann's voice were stilled, others would arise to do valiant battle in behalf of the children in this great movement which is not the work of a single man or a few men but a great rush of widespread human sentiment.

Mann, whose mind tended to figures of speech and to overstatement for rhetorical effect, hurled caustic phrase and smothering epithet at his assailants. Whereas his writings usually bore the imprint of carefully weighed phrases and elevated statement, his *Reply* shows an impatience, a petulance, an emotionality and a lack of discretion which thoroughly exposed him to another counterattack. How much better it would have been had he refused to be drawn away from the fundamental issues! In endeavoring to justify himself on every point he became involved in petty details which had little important bearing on the case. But he had succeeded in dramatizing the case before the public; while his friends were doubtless somewhat chagrined at the vindictiveness he displayed in his furious onslaughts against his detractors, the final outcome of the argument was a unified support which had not been his for years. Newspapers enlisted in his support and against the masters. He was instrumental in having Dr. Howe made a member of the school committee of the city of Boston and appointed on a committee to examine the children in the schools. The results of the examination, more than any argument of words, showed the weaknesses of the masters' position and the incompetence of several of them, who were forced to resign.

In December, 1844, a committee was appointed by the masters to reply to the late document, and the following April a *Rejoinder* was issued. While the committee was engaged in preparing it, a group of leading Boston citizens,

personal friends and friends of Mann's cause, sent him a letter bearing testimony to "the new and strong interest which has been awakened in the cause of *education*," and the "priceless value of the *common schools*." It was the same group who had pledged money for normal school buildings. They declared their agreement with him in the leading planks of his educational platform, and closed with an eloquent tribute of faith in him and his cause:

By the mass of your labors you have contributed essentially to the happiness and prosperity of the Commonwealth, and to its fame abroad. Your name helps to make the name of Massachusetts respectable throughout our own country and in distant lands.

If it be true, as has been said, that he is a benefactor, who infuses new energies into a whole people, doubling in ten thousand souls the capacities for usefulness and happiness! To you, as the author of so much good, we wish to offer our sincere thanks. We feel a debt of gratitude, which it will be always our pleasure still paying, still to owe. These are no mere words of course, but the spontaneous tributes of the heart.

In the contemplation of the successful result of your labors, you must find springs of encouragement, to which little can be added by any words of ours. Such words would be drowned in the voice of good you have done, speaking from the past, and bidding you to be of good cheer for the future. Let hope elevate, and joy brighten your countenance! But we cannot dissemble from you what you discern so much more clearly than ourselves, that, although much has been done, much more remains to be done. In the warfare with ignorance, there is neither peace, nor neutrality. The enemy is always among us, in extensive encampment, wakeful, and ready for contest. In this warfare you are our leader. Our services and sympathies will always be at your command. We would join with you in all possible occasions, and in all possible ways, to advance the cause to which your life is devoted.

May God continue to you strength for your labors! and may the happiness which you have diffused among your fellow-men be reflected in your own fireside.

We are, dear sir, with sentiments of affection and respect, your sincere friends.<sup>14</sup>

Just about the same time public support came to Mann in a more definite and concrete way. The friends who had been responsible for raising private funds and securing a grant from the legislature for normal school buildings at Westfield and Bridgewater, found that Mann needed defense against himself as well as against the masters. His *Reply* had been severely criticized: *The North American Review* had written of it that many of its inductions were hastily made, some of the descriptions were overdone, feeling sometimes submerged his judgment, and the language was often extravagant. Some of the charges were found unreasonable, denunciations were heaped upon personalities rather than upon the positions they took, and all this was done with too much vigor and impatience. Charles Sumner, who had himself pledged his personal word that funds would be raised for normal school buildings, wrote to Dr. Howe: "I am very sorry that the pedagogues of Boston have assailed Mann and wish I could have joined in your counsels for his defense. To you and to Mann I should say, *Moderation!* I honor, almost revere, the zeal of the latter, and the ability by which it is sustained; but I sometimes doubt his judgment and taste."<sup>15</sup>

The *Rejoinder* was a well-constructed document which embarrassed the secretary and put him on the defensive by showing some of the glaring defects of his *Reply*. These, however, concerned minor and insignificant details. Funda-

<sup>14</sup> Letter of January 13, 1845, signed by thirty-four persons, among whom were Josiah Quincy, George S. Hilliard, S. G. Howe, Charles Brooks, Henry W. Longfellow, Charles Sumner, George B. Emerson, Edward G. Loring, and Thomas Cushing, Jr. *Mann Papers*.

<sup>15</sup> PIERCE, EDWARD L.—*Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner*, Vol. II, page 319. Letter dated September 11, 1844. Boston, 1877.

mental principles were temporarily shoved aside in the quibbles over petty inaccuracies. But such arguments ran against the drift of the times. The public was now joining in support of the general program which had been set up and cared less and less about minute details of the movement.

The *Answer*, prepared by Mann to refute the *Rejoinder*, was a much more temperate consideration of the facts, and a much more logical presentation than his *Reply*. He doubtless felt that his own position was now more secure and that his cause was conquering. He was doubtless influenced by the admonitions of his friends that he be more cautious. He had himself realized his former error in giving way to his feelings. With this pamphlet the dreary wordy struggle came to a close so far as the immediate combatants were concerned. But the arguments were to reverberate in daily conversation, in pulpit, and in press for many a day.

We must now turn to the religious struggle. In Mann's day the religious and the educational were inseparably intertwined. A mere decade before he assumed office sectarianism had been abolished from the schools. Sectarian and denominational differences played a greater part in the life of the people a century ago than now. The religious struggle between the Orthodox and Unitarian divisions of the Massachusetts churches was then at its height; a bitterness which is not at present understandable was displayed by the two branches of the church in their attitude towards each other. Mann was a Unitarian and a majority of the Board of Education and of the public men of the day adhered to the same liberal position. From the first the eyes of the orthodox were fixed upon him.

On his very first circuit of the school conventions, in 1837, he had been criticized because he absented himself from the church services while passing the Sabbath at Edgartown.



The following year the *New York Observer* published a series of letters, at the time anonymous, but later discovered to be from the pen of Mr. Packard, of the American Sunday School Union, addressed to Mr. Humphreys, president of Amherst College and later member of the Board, asking what would be the effect of the policies of the Board of Education on religious instruction in the schools. We have already noted that Mr. Mann had refused to admit the volumes of the Sunday school library prepared by the Union into the schools. Just about the same time *The Recorder* of Boston began a guerilla warfare upon the Board and its secretary which was to last for years. In 1844 Mann wrote that the journal had sought every chance to misrepresent his conduct and to question the motives underlying his official conduct. The schools were accused of being "Godless" and anti-religious. These religious attacks furnished support to the political and legislative opponents in the attempts of 1840 and 1841 to discontinue the Board and to oust the secretary from his position. Another paper, *The Trumpet*, on the other hand, saw danger that the Board would introduce sectarian doctrines into the schools. Though little is said in Mann's public addresses and writings about these attacks, much is revealed by his journal and in his letters to personal friends. As one skilled in legislative matters, his favorite method was to work quietly through influential citizens and members of the legislature, "putting up lightning-conductors to draw off the electricity" from the clouds raised against the Board.

When *The Christian Witness and Church Advocate*, an Episcopalian organ, appeared with a letter on "Christian Education" in its issue of February 23, 1844, severe strictures were passed on the policy of the Board of Education, and it was asserted that there was little or no difference between the system that Stephen Girard, founder of the college,

had specified for Girard College, and the system which the Board was establishing in the schools of Massachusetts. The article later proved to be from the hand of Mr. Edward A. Newton, member of the first group appointed by Governor Everett to constitute the Board of Education and opponent of its policies. It was the spark that set off the tinder box of religious controversy. Accusation and counteraccusation flew back and forth. Mr. Girard had been much influenced in his action by the revolutionary writings of Mr. Paine and of the French deists, whose writings were anathema to the orthodox groups. When he founded his college, by the terms of his will he had insisted that no clergyman should ever enter its gates. An analogy was seen in the Massachusetts situation. The secular *Common School Library*, which by law and decision of the Board excluded the works of theologians from its lists, tended to the neglect of religion. In fact the whole common-school system, together with the means used for promoting it, was divorced from true religious motive. The general effect of *The Common School Journal*, Mann's lectures, his reports, the normal-school idea, and the make-up of the Board itself was subversive of the treasured tradition of Massachusetts. The Board of Education was declared a useless instrumentality of the state which, through its usurpation of power, was antidemocratic and contrary to the long-cherished principles of local government. It was insisted that morality could not be separated from religion. The orthodox, however, interpreted the law of 1827, excluding sectarianism from the schools, to apply only to church government and not to the doctrines which were generally accepted by orthodox groups. They wished the *catechism* used as a textbook. In plain fact, they wished the Puritan beliefs re-established in the schools.

It was about this time that Mann's *Seventh Annual*

*Report* appeared. In it he had criticized the English system of church-controlled education, the result of which was a neglect of the common school emphasis. He had called attention to the unsatisfactory condition of the schools in England purposely as "an antidote against attempting the same things here." But in the minds of the ultra-orthodox it produced just the opposite effect. It renewed their zeal for sectarian teaching. They joined with the Boston masters in crying out against the menace to the faith of their fathers.

In his three letters, written in reply to present his case, he states forcefully and lucidly the principles which he saw involved in the dispute. He countered by declaring that the law of 1827 clearly and specifically debarred sectarian teaching from the schools. But Christian teaching without sectarian bias was encouraged. The majority of the Board and the committeemen of the state were clergymen. On the library question as on others, the Board had always acted with the good of the schools in view and had never divided in their policy on religious grounds. The Bible was not excluded from the schools; in fact teachers were encouraged to read it, although without comment. To introduce sectarian disputes would destroy the whole common-school movement. Though religious instruction might be compulsory in despotic countries abroad, in republican and democratic America this could not be. He declared that, of their own volition, many schools had long before discontinued the use of the catechism in schools, and that in the reports of school committees all but two out of a thousand opposed sectarian instruction. He stoutly reaffirmed the principle of the universal nonsectarian school. Needless to say the weight of editorial opinion and the general sentiment of the people supported the secretary's position.

But the issue would not down. On August 19, 1846, the

normal-school building at Bridgewater had been dedicated. Teachers' institutes had been begun. These successes only irritated their opponents. On the following October 10, Rev. Matthew Hale Smith, a Calvinist of reactionary tendencies, preached a sermon before the Church and Society of Pilgrims in Boston, taking as his bizarre and sensational subject, "The Ark of God on a New Cart." In it he asserted that the ark was being drawn by oxen on a cart rather than carried on the shoulders of the priests of God. The inference was clear. Neglecting religious instruction, the schools had descended from a spiritual to a secular plane. As a result, society was becoming corrupt and depraved because it lacked the religious teaching necessary to keep it sound at the core. Juvenile errancy and delinquency had increased. This, he declared, was due to the elimination of the Bible from instruction, the abolition of corporal punishment, and the substitution of the common school for religious instruction in homes and Sunday Schools. He attacked the Board for its nonsectarian policy on the Common School Library and for allowing its secretary to spread propaganda through the state which resulted in undermining the religious views of the people. Rev. Smith had chosen a psychological moment for an effective attack. The newspapers had just waged war against the moral conditions of Boston; these, he professed, were due in large part to the policy of the common-school system. The sermon received wide publicity, being delivered orally twice; wide circulation was given through the newspapers and in a printed pamphlet. Mann replied that school committees, not the Board of Education, determined whether or not the Bible was to be read in town schools; the Board had exerted its influence strongly to encourage the daily use of the Bible in common schools and required it in the normal schools; the Board had never taken

any action abolishing the use of corporal punishment and urged only that abuses be rectified; and in selecting the Common School Library, both orthodox and liberal members had concurred.

Though there were some who agreed with the position of Rev. Smith, the great weight of public opinion supported Mann. Against the view that minority groups who disagreed with the policy of the school district might withdraw their proportion of the public funds to maintain their own schools, Mann opposed the argument that both from a theoretical and a practical standpoint, this was impossible. If the wordy argument in the communications and countercommunications now seems beside the point and not pertinent, in it Mann again emphasizes his fundamental position which is the very heart of the system of universal education. Against the notion that each town or school district might exercise its own option and pursue its own policy on the matter he argues:

It is easy to see that the experiment would not stop with having half a dozen conflicting creeds taught by authority of law, in the different schools of the same town or vicinity. Majorities will change in the same place. One sect may have the ascendancy today; another tomorrow. This year, there will be three Persons in the Godhead; next year, but One; and the third year the Trinity will be restored, to hold its precarious sovereignty, until it shall be again dethroned by the worms of the dust it has made. This year, the everlasting fires of hell will burn to terrify the impenitent; next year, and without any repentance, its eternal flames will be extinguished,—to be rekindled forever, or to be quenched forever, as it may be decided at annual town meetings. This year, under Congregational rule, the Rev. Mr. So and So, and the Rev. Dr. So and So, will be on the committee; but next year, these Reverends and Reverend Doctors will be plain Mist-ers,—never having had apostolical consecration from the Bishop. This year, the ordinance of baptism is inefficacious without im-



mersion; next year one drop of water will be as good as forty fathoms. Children attending the district schools will be taught one way; going from the district school to the town high school, they will be taught another way. In controversies involving such momentous interests, the fiercest party spirit will rage, and all the contemplations of heaven will be poisoned by the passions of earth. Will not town lines and school districts be altered, to restore an unsuccessful, or to defeat a successful party? Will not fiery zealots move from place to place, to turn the theological scale, as, it is said, is sometimes now done, to turn a political one? And will not the godless make a merchandise of religion by being bribed to do the same thing? Can aught be conceived more deplorable, more fatal to the interests of the young than this? Such strifes and persecutions on the question of total depravity as to make all men depraved at any rate; and such contests about the nature and the number of Persons in the Godhead in heaven, as to make little children atheists upon earth.

If the question, "What theology shall be taught in the schools?" is to be decided by districts or towns, then all the prudential and the superintending committees must be chosen with express reference to their faith; the creed of every candidate for teaching must be investigated; and when litigations arise,—and such a system will breed them in swarms,—an ecclesiastical tribunal,—some Star Chamber, or High Commission Court, must be created to decide them. If the Governor is to have power to appoint the Judges of this Spiritual Tribunal, he also must be chosen with reference to the appointments he will make and so too must the Legislators who are to define their power, and to give them the Purse and Sword of the State, to execute their authority. Call such officers by the name of Judge and Governor, or Cardinal and Pope, *the thing will be the same!* The establishment of the true faith will not stop with the schoolroom. Its grasping jurisdiction will extend over all schools, over all private faith and public worship; until at last, after all our centuries of struggle and of suffering, it will come back to the inquisition, the fagot, and the rack!

Let me ask here, too, where is the consistency of those, who advocate the right of a *town* or a *district* to determine, by a majority, what theology shall be taught in the schools, but deny

the same right to the *State*? Does not this inconsistency blaze out in the faces of such advocates, so as to make them *feel*, if they are too blind to *see*? This would be true, even if the State had written out the theology it would enforce. But ours has not. It has only said that no one sect shall obtain any advantage over other sects, by means of the school system, which, for purposes of self-preservation, it has established.<sup>16</sup>

Of all opposition, political, educational and religious, the last was most serious. The religious issue ran like a thread through all attempts to interfere with the policies of the Board or to abolish it and its work. The very life of the system of universal education itself hung on the outcome. Mann always stood firmly for nonpartisanship of the school in both religion and politics. He had stated his philosophy clearly in his controversy with the masters:

The Board of Education was not established to show favor or disfavor to any one political or religious party, as it regards other political or religious parties. I believe it is their wish, as it is certainly my wish, that the fundamental principles of our republican government should be unfolded in the schools; but not that teachers should espouse either side of the great controverted questions in politics,—whether as to measures or men,—on which the nation is divided. I believe it is their wish, as it is mine, that the Bible should continue to be used in our schools; but still, that it shall be left with the local authorities,—where the law now leaves it,—to say, in what manner, in what classes, etc., it shall be used.

To us a century later, much of the argument seems irrelevant and specious. It dragged on through hundreds of pages.<sup>17</sup> Much acrid invective and hurling of epithets accom-

<sup>16</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Sequel to the So-called Correspondence between the Rev. M. H. Smith and Horace Mann*, pages 40-42. Boston, 1847.

<sup>17</sup> Mr. Mann had himself collected and bound into one volume of 1,573 pages twenty-one pamphlets, with the title, "*The Common School Controversy*." See *Life and Works of Horace Mann*, Boston, 1891. Introduction.

panied the verbal battle. But Mann had wisely dramatized the fundamental issues, and riveted public attention upon them. So effective was he that the citizens of the whole state were compelled to listen to his arguments. By so doing, too, they absorbed and adopted the principles which in Mann's opinion were the very life blood of a common-school system. Although, as an outcome of the combat, there were bitter personal enemies, the cause was never so firmly entrenched in the minds and affections of the public. With a rising public support of the Board the opposition collapsed. Even the Massachusetts Teachers Association, organized in 1844 to follow up the attack of the Boston masters, at its first session tabled a resolution of support and disclaimed any intention of antagonizing the Board. Benjamin Greenleaf declared that the Association meant "peace on earth, and goodwill to Mann."

## CHAPTER XIII

### LAST DAYS AS SECRETARY

**T**HOUGH Mann opposed introducing sectarianism into the schools, he had always strongly supported instruction in morals and religion. Had his wishes been followed, it is likely that present-day schools would be religious rather than secular, but on the other hand religious rather than sectarian. It should be noted that the religious struggles of his day were not between Catholics and Protestants, but between different Protestant sects. The parochial-school question did not arise as a prominent issue until after Mann's retirement.

After his encounter with Rev. Smith, the opposition to Mann was less dramatic, though no less real. For the most part it was sporadic, the outbursts of a few disgruntled individuals rather than a concerted organized movement. The potential effect of Smith's assault was largely neutralized by the effectiveness and cogency of Mann's rebuttal. Those who disagreed were silenced and disagreed covertly rather than openly.

In 1847 the Massachusetts General Association, general Sunday School convention of the orthodox sects, appointed a committee to investigate "what ought to be done for the spiritual benefit of the younger members of our congregations." A report was prepared, which was submitted three months after Mann's resignation, expressing opposition to the Board, the secretary, and normal schools. As Mann had declined re-election and was no longer a target, it was recom-

mended that no action be taken on it. It is clear that sectarian opposition to Mann was not due to organized religious sects or forces, but to isolated individuals and groups. Many of his firmest supporters and most ardent admirers were lay members or clergy in orthodox churches. The law of 1827, forbidding sectarian instruction in Massachusetts, had been passed a decade before he took office and represented the composite thinking of all religious groups in the Commonwealth. The hostility of the Massachusetts General Association was nearest of all to formal organized opposition.

With the religious question fresh in mind, Mann in his *Eleventh Report*, which was published early in 1848, took for his main theme, *The Power of Common Schools to Redeem the State from Social Vices and Crimes*. As was so frequently his custom, he addressed a letter to prominent authorities to secure their opinion on points at issue. He used the opinions he received as a basis for a vigorous appeal for better teachers, professionally prepared and professionally minded, and for adequate social recognition for them. He pointed out the necessity for compulsory attendance and a lengthened school term for all children from four to sixteen. Such a system of universal education, he declared, would not be contradictory to, but entirely consonant with, religion.

While the religious attack was being made upon the secretary, he was contemplating a change in his mode of living. Since his return from his European trip, he and Mrs. Mann had lived in rented quarters now at one place, now another. His meager salary made any other course impossible. Two of his three sons had been born, Horace, named after his father (February 25, 1844), and George Combe, named after his philosopher friend (December 27, 1845). Another, Benjamin Pickman, or "Benjy" was to be born April 30,



1848, just a few weeks before his resignation from the secretaryship. The "wandering Tartar life" hindered his work and was a constant source of annoyance and irritation. Looking about for a place of residence, he had chosen West Newton because it was the seat of the normal school and was near the city of Boston. His friend, Cyrus Pierce, who had resumed the principalship of the normal school, completed the transaction for the purchase of a lot. On it a large frame house was constructed, which was finished and ready for occupancy on Christmas eve, 1846. Mann had written to Combe:

I have been a wanderer for twenty years; and when any one asked me where I lived, I could say, in the language of another, "I do not live anywhere; I *board*." This Arab life I could bear while I was alone; but when I had "wife and weans" to carry from place to place, it became intolerable. I should have preferred, on many accounts to live in the city; but so small is my salary, and so considerable the demands made upon it in order to carry forward the cause, that it was necessary to give up the idea of a city residence, or resign my office. We have, therefore, put up a shelter at West Newton, ten miles from Boston, and within a hundred rods of the West Newton Normal School.<sup>1</sup>

West Newton at the time was a village of thirty or forty houses, with less than a thousand inhabitants, a rather dismal and ill-appearing suburban town. The normal school was its chief claim to fame. Here Mann lived delightfully and in fine spirits. He found an outlet for his native cheerfulness in play with his children and in social relations with his friends. As a fervent believer in nature and her truth he disapproved of using fairy tales with children, even those of his brother-in-law, Nathaniel Hawthorne; but he told his children of the wonders of science.

<sup>1</sup> Letter to George Combe, West Newton, February 25, 1847. *Mann Papers*.

His house was the center of a charming and congenial group. Among them were Elizabeth Peabody, Catherine Beecher (sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Henry Ward Beecher), Rebecca Pennell, his niece, instructor in the normal school, and Celia Thaxter. Cyrus Pierce was principal of the normal school and Mr. Nathaniel T. Allen, whose house was a station on the "underground railroad" in Massachusetts, was in charge of the model department of the normal school. Theodore Parker lived not far away in Auburndale and spent his summers at West Newton, where Mann first learned to know him well. The Hawthornes were visitors; it was to his house that they came to live during the winter of 1851 while Mann and his family were in Washington; and in it *The Blithedale Romance*, a satire on Brook Farm, was written. As no office was furnished for the secretary it was here that a great deal of his official work was done.

While in Boston Mann had attended the Federal Street Church of which William Ellery Channing was pastor, and in West Newton with others he founded the First Unitarian Society.

Governor Briggs had commended him highly in his address to the legislature in which, as in former messages, he spoke approvingly of the teachers' institutes and normal schools. Of Mann's work in particular did he speak approvingly and appreciatively: "Justice to a faithful public officer leads me to say, that the indefatigable and accomplished secretary of the Board of Education, has performed and is performing services in the cause of common schools which will earn for him the lasting gratitude of the generation to which he belongs." <sup>2</sup> He also supported the program of educational

<sup>2</sup> Address of Governor George N. Briggs before the two branches of the Legislature, *Senate Document, No. 2*, January 12, 1847.

advance by insisting upon higher qualifications, better wages, and permanent employment for teachers.

Soon thereafter a sudden turn in political affairs changed the direction of the secretary's life. John Quincy Adams, former president of the United States, had been serving as the Representative in Congress from the Eighth District. On February 23, 1848, while attending a legislative session, he was stricken with paralysis and died almost immediately. The leaders in his district looked for an able and courageous leader worthy to succeed him and to represent a district long known as one of the most prominent in the country. Several candidates were considered by the Whig convention, but Mann stood out above all as best fitted to assume the place of the fallen leader. Although he had not taken an active part in political affairs, not even attending the caucuses since his election as secretary, he was still remembered for his faithful and distinguished work in the Massachusetts legislature, and his recent combats with the opponents of education had made him more than ever the champion of the liberal reformers. The convention soon settled upon him as one "whose principles were in consonance with those of his predecessor, whose fidelity to the great principles of human freedom shall be unwavering—whose voice and vote shall on all occasions be exercised in extending and securing liberty to the human race."<sup>3</sup>

His first impulse was to decline the nomination. He was engaged heart and soul in his work for the schools. Some, including Governor Briggs, urged him to remain to finish the work he had so well begun as secretary. Others urged him to accept the nomination. His friend, Josiah Quincy, wrote: "Your knowledge and reputation will at once make

<sup>3</sup> Resolutions informing Mann of his nomination by the Whig Delegates. March 15, 1848. *Mann Papers*.

you the rallying point for the friends of education throughout our land and cause your influence to be felt and your name to be remembered long after those of the statesmen and the warriors are forgotten. You must accept the office. . . ." Charles Sumner, hesitating to urge his acceptance, wrote that he would be sorry to see him accept if *duty* were to call him in another direction, but urged upon him a *triumphant* letter if he did accept, for: "You can show, as no other man can, how supreme is duty above all the suggestions of *expediency*, or the urgency of party. . . . Avowing a hatred of slavery, you can well renounce the slavery of party. Such a letter will strengthen all Massachusetts." After due deliberation he accepted the nomination, and on April 3, 1848, was elected to fill the unexpired term as Mr. Adams' successor. Henry Barnard wrote a letter of congratulation, saying: "You go to a field, where, I cannot but think, you can exert a greater or at least a wider influence in the right direction than in your own state." George B. Emerson had urged Mann to decline re-election to the secretaryship, believing that he had worn himself out in the service and would not live much longer unless he changed his vocation. He thought, too, that perhaps because he had become too sensitive and suffered too much from opposition, he would have greater influence and would advance the cause of education more in Congress than by remaining in the Massachusetts secretaryship.

To Mann himself and to his nearest friends the precarious state of his health was the foremost consideration. In a letter to Combe he declares: "I now verily believe that another year, without aid and without relaxation, would have closed my labors upon earth." The other was the new and larger opportunity which he saw. In acceptance of the Whig nomination he had written:

So far as personal preferences are concerned, I infinitely prefer remaining in my present position, with all its labors and its thanklessness, to any office in the gift of the people. I had hoped and intended, either in a public or private capacity, to spend my life in advancing the great cause of the people's education. The enactment of laws which shall cover waste territory, to be applied to the myriads of human beings who are hereafter to occupy that territory, is a work which seems to precede and outrank even education. Whether a wide expanse of country shall be filled with human beings to whom education is permitted, or with those to whom it is denied—with those whom humanity and the law make it a duty to teach, or with those whom inhumanity and the law make it a *legal* duty not to teach, seems preliminary to all questions respecting the best systems and methods for rendering education effective.<sup>4</sup>

There is the additional reason that he was still under severe criticism and believed that the good of the cause demanded a change in his office. In May a friend had written him of an address in which the speaker had boasted that "there was a coalition of all the evangelical sects to put down the Board of Education, and this would be done in less than a year."<sup>5</sup> At the time there were six orthodox as against four liberals on the Board of Education. Hostility was now centering upon Mann and Cyrus Pierce rather than on the Board. Letters from his wife and others imply that some of the members of the Board were disaffected.<sup>6</sup> He believed that if Barnard or some other good orthodox were made secretary the "orthodox would favor the Board."<sup>7</sup>

After due consideration on May 20, 1848, Mann declined to accept a re-election and so wrote to Governor Briggs, chairman. Recounting his work with the Board of Educa-

<sup>4</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Slavery Letters and Speeches*, pages 8-9. Boston, 1851.

<sup>5</sup> Letter, William B. Fowle, May 23, 1848. *Mann Papers*.

<sup>6</sup> See particularly, Letter from Mrs. Mann, dated May 19, 1848, and one from William B. Fowle, *op. cit.* *Mann Papers*.

<sup>7</sup> Entry July 13, 1848, document, Antioch College Library.



tion, he expressed his gratification for his twelve successive re-elections, saying in sincere and poignant phrases:

They have conferred upon me the only office I ever coveted, and have placed me in direct and active relation to the only object of ambition I have ever had,—the well-being of *all* the people, thro' the instrumentality of education. To have had an opportunity to labor in this cause, thro' such a series of years, I regard as the happiness of my life; and tho' this happiness has not been without its trials, yet I am sure that the pains of the trials will pass away, while the remembrance of the joy will survive and abide. I had long cherished the hope, that, either in a public or private capacity, I might remain in this field of labor during the residue of my life; but since the last meeting of the Board, circumstances have intervened, which will, partially and temporarily at least, divert me from this immediate work. My hands may be taken from it; but not my heart. My direct efforts may be withdrawn from it; but my interest in it can never be alienated. Among benevolent objects, it is the most benevolent; among noble pursuits, it is the noblest; among objects of ambition, I regard it as the highest.<sup>8</sup>

He had secretly cherished the hope that he would be continued in his position until the end of the year for which he was appointed. On June first the Board passed a resolution requesting him to remain, saying:

That the Board have received with deep regret the communication of the Hon. Horace Mann, in which he declines a reelection to the office of Secretary; and that while they yield to the necessity of anticipating his retirement from the field of labor, in which he has rendered such invaluable services to the Commonwealth and to his country and his race, they indulge the hope, and would hereby express the request, that he will continue to perform the duties of the office until the time appointed for the election of a

<sup>8</sup> Letter, May 20, 1848, Massachusetts State Department of Education.

successor; and that His Excellency the Governor be requested to transmit to Mr. Mann a copy of these votes.

By the same set of resolutions the election of a successor was deferred till the December meeting. In a letter forwarding the resolutions to Mann the Governor speaks in glowing



*Courtesy Horace Mann (Grandson), Richmond, Massachusetts*

#### HORACE MANN'S DESK

terms of his services and expresses his belief that it is the unanimous wish of the Board that he continue in his duties.

In issuing the *Twelfth Report*, the last submitted and the last official act he performed as secretary, Mann summarizes the twelve years of progress in the cause, made during his term. Now freed from his duties, with no enemies to placate

or to conciliate, he can speak from a full heart. He presents comparisons to show the advances which were made in appropriations, attendance, normal schools, schoolhouses, textbooks, and apparatus. Much space is given over to reviewing former reports. It is a fitting climax to his work. A writer in the *Edinburgh Review* writes with deep appreciation of its import: "The volume is, indeed, a noble monument of civilized people; and, if America were sunk beneath the waves, would remain the fairest picture on record of that ideal commonwealth."

In the resolutions, unanimously passed and placed on record by the Board of Education when he retired, they say: "In reviewing the official course of the secretary of the Board, we are led to contemplate extraordinary proofs of the devotion of talents of the highest order, under the influence of the purest motives, to a work of usefulness, which, in respect alike to the magnitude of its results, and the nature and extent of the labor involved in it, must be deemed as unsurpassed in the annals of the Commonwealth"; and "that . . . we desire to place on record, and to tender to Mr. Mann, the most unqualified assurance of our official approbation of his services, and of our warmest personal regard, and best wishes for his future usefulness, honor, and happiness."

The Governor in his address to the legislature, reflecting on his five years of association with the secretary as an official, after restating the resolutions which had been passed, continues: "He has made himself a benefactor of his race. The memory of his extraordinary services in the cause of education will be treasured up in the true hearts of one whole generation of the children of his native Commonwealth, who have been the witnesses of his labors, and the partakers of their fruits. That memory will as certainly be

transmitted to those who shall follow them, as one generation of men will, by the physical laws of their being, be succeeded by another.”<sup>9</sup>

How great a personal sacrifice he had made for the schools perhaps no one will ever fully know. Mann's initial salary in the position was \$1,000; it was increased during his second year to \$1,500 where it remained during his incumbency in the office. Through the generosity of Edmund Dwight this was increased \$500 each year, making his total income \$1,500 for the first year, and \$2,000 thereafter. No allowance was made for personal expenses; as early as 1843 he states that the personal expenses incurred by him from year to year in behalf of the cause were barely covered by his annual salary.<sup>10</sup> A recital of some of the payments throws much light on his zeal for the success of the cause. He personally had paid for printing and distributing three thousand copies of Thayer's lecture and a like number of Page's lecture on *Mutual Duties of Parents and Teachers* to the school districts of the state; he had secured the rights to Palmer's prize essay on *The Teacher*, that he might publish it in *The Common School Journal*; for the normal schools he had bought dictionaries, outline maps, and furniture. When the normal school at Lexington was endangered in its growth because it did not have a boarding house for girls, he had sold his law library to secure funds for furnishing one. He had spent considerable of his own money to repair and fit up the building for the normal school at West Newton (Howe and George B. Emerson furnishing the remainder); his own account had been drawn on to secure buildings for the normal schools at Bridgewater and Westfield.

<sup>9</sup> This section, as well as the resolutions of the preceding paragraph from *Senate Document No. 2*. "Address of His Excellency George N. Briggs to the Two Branches of the Legislature of Massachusetts," January 10, 1849.

<sup>10</sup> *Senate Document No. 12*, Boston, Massachusetts, January 26, 1843.



He had spent two thousand dollars on his voyage to Europe to visit schools and the benefits of his visit had been given to his state through his *Seventh Annual Report*; for the first five years he had made circuits of the state to lecture to school conventions for a period of three to four months a year, paying his own traveling and living expenses, perhaps totaling two hundred and fifty dollars a year; he had given gratuitous lectures, sometimes even paying for lighting and heating the building; he had spent "*in money, for printing*" more than a thousand dollars in issuing his controversial pamphlets over and above what others had contributed, and had paid others for lecturing in behalf of common schools in the state. Whatever books he needed in English or foreign languages had to be purchased out of his small salary.<sup>11</sup>

Some of his friends—Emerson, just recently appointed as a member of the Board of Education, Dwight, and Howe among them—took steps after his resignation to bring the matter of his expenses to the attention of the legislature. He reluctantly furnished information as to his principal expenditures on condition that he should not be placed in the position of seeking reimbursement. The committee reported to the legislature: "He asks for nothing. What he has done, he meant, at the time, as a gift; and the committee do not propose to deprive him of the title of a benefactor. They do not propose to pay him off. He does not desire, and would not be willing to be fully reimbursed; but before all money that the treasury of the Commonwealth contains, he prefers to cherish the happy and noble thought, that he has labored and suffered in her behalf." His contributions had amounted, according to the estimate of Emerson, to between four and five thousand dollars. The legislature voted, by unanimous

<sup>11</sup> Letter to George B. Emerson, December 18, 1848. *Mann Papers*.



action of both branches, to recompense him in the sum of \$2,000 "not as remuneration, not to pay him off, but as a token of appreciation of rare disinterestedness in the public service." <sup>12</sup>

He was never selfish in his relations with coworkers. He attempted to secure the best men and women available for the positions at his disposal. When Mr. Newman had consented to take the principalship of the normal school at Barre, Mann quoted him approvingly <sup>13</sup> as regarding the office of principal of a normal school as no less worthy or dignified nor less elevated in its purposes than the position he was then filling as a professor at Bowdoin. That Mann himself so considered the position is seen in the initial salaries which were paid to the principals: \$1,500, with \$300 for moving expenses, to Cyrus Pierce at Lexington; \$1,400, with \$300 for moving expenses, to S. P. Newman at Barre; and \$1,400 and \$100 for moving expenses to Nicholas Tillinghast at Bridgewater. This, too, in the very same year in which the Committee on Retrenchment in the legislature was recommending that his own salary be reduced to \$800.<sup>14</sup> Just about the same time he had had an informal offer to go to Missouri as president of a college at a salary of \$3,000 a year, besides a house. But he said, "I would rather remain here and work for mere bread than go there for the wealth of the great valley of the Mississippi. Oh, may I prosper in this! I ask no other reward for all my labors.

<sup>12</sup> *House Bill, No. 77, House of Representatives of Massachusetts, March 9, 1849.*

<sup>13</sup> *The Common School Journal, July 15, 1839.*

<sup>14</sup> Significance may be seen in the comparative salaries of the masters in the Boston grammar schools. Minutes of the School Committee of Boston show the masters' salaries from 1837 to 1841 ranged from \$1,000 to \$1,500 a year. "Ushers" were paid as much as \$1,000 a year. The average salary of teachers in Massachusetts in 1847 was about twenty-five dollars for men, eight dollars for women, exclusive of board. (From Minutes of the School Committee, City of Boston.)

This is my only object of ambition; and if this is lost, what tie will bind me to earth?"<sup>15</sup> Truly it was a consuming interest in a great cause which animated him.

The monetary considerations were insignificant compared with the loss of caste which ensued when he took up the burden of this "despised" position, and the hostility and bitterness which were shown towards his inspired enterprise. But "his eighty thousand children" meant more to him than any mere place or position in society. It was for them that he was willing to face the venomous darts of the bigoted, the disappointed, and the partisan.

And what a service it was that he rendered! It is perhaps nowhere more accurately recapitulated than in an editorial appearing in a leading Boston newspaper just after his resignation:

Twelve years ago, at the earnest solicitation of many true friends of their race, and far-seeing guardians of our beloved state, he was induced to relinquish honors which he held in full possession: competency, which he might have considered secure; and advancement, the path to which was wide open; for favor in prospect, which was to be earned by toil and much endurance; for pecuniary emolument, the only sure element of which was its inadequacy to meet his wants; and for advancement, not from the high point to which he had already attained, but from an humble starting place, from which to eminence not a step of the pathway had been broken.

Under such circumstances a common man would have assuredly failed; nay, he would have shrunk back, and abandoned so arduous, so humiliating, and so hopeless a task. But Mr. Mann had already accomplished many works that were sufficient guarantees for his ability, and for his readiness to sacrifice himself for the sake of others; and his earliest reports show that he did not undertake the work before he had calculated the labor and cost.

<sup>15</sup> *Journal*, page 131, entry, December 25, 1839. The offer had been made the previous week.

He saw the limited territory and population of Massachusetts, and her daily diminution in rank and importance on this account, and he felt in its full force, the truth that nothing could save her from degradation but the superior intelligence and virtue of her citizens. The common school system, which originated with the founders of Massachusetts, and was a remarkable effort for their times, had fallen into disrepute, and had become the mere shadow of a mighty name. So far from advancing beyond its original limits, as man advanced, and science spread, and means had increased, it had come to a stand everywhere, the spirit had departed, and even the lifeless form was shrinking up through apathy and neglect. The state was improvident, the towns were indifferent, the parents were neglectful, and the teachers incompetent, and the work of awakening the state to its duty and its danger; of arousing the towns to activity, the parents to a sense of their responsibility, and the teachers to a sense of their incompetency; this and nothing short of this, was to be done, in order to meet the exigency, and avert the danger.

This task, hopeless, and thankless, and profitless as it seemed to common minds, was the task set before Mr. Mann, and those only who know the condition of the state twelve years ago, and who are aware of its present animation and substantial improvement, can form an adequate idea of the zeal, the energy, and enduring self-sacrifice, which have wrought out the reformation. To enumerate all the particulars of this remarkable work, would be to copy the twelve Annual Reports of the Secretary, each a volume, the Annual Abstracts of School Returns, each of them work enough for the year of whose labors it was a small item; the ten volumes of the Common School Journal; and the volume of Official Lectures, unmatched for their wisdom, their beauty and their power; and even then we should have but a meagre record of what the pen has done, while all that the tongue has accomplished, to conciliate the hostile, to reconcile the conflicting, to instruct the inquiring, to encourage the despairing, and, as it were, to raise the dead, would remain untold.

This great work, however, has been done, and well done. There is sensation in every nerve, power in every muscle, and activity in every limb of the Commonwealth. The citizens of the districts, by

their own voluntary act, have assessed themselves more than two million dollars for the erection and improvement of schoolhouses; they have doubled the amount paid to their teachers; and the quality of the teachers has risen in proportion at least to their increased remuneration; the discipline of the schools has been essentially ameliorated; the branches taught have not only been increased in number, but have been more intelligibly and thoroughly taught; the textbooks have become better adapted to practical instruction, but, what is perhaps of more importance, they have become uniform in each school, and, generally, in each entire town; the classification of pupils, and the consequent gradation of schools into primary, grammar and high schools, will form an era in the history of education; the normal schools, established and successfully conducted so far, have leavened the mass of our teachers, and taught them their duty and their claims; the school committees have become more vigilant, more earnest, more intelligent; the people have become more liberal, and disposed to claim as a right and a privilege, what before was a scandal and a burden; and finally, the government of the state has begun to feel that its strength lies in general education, and that this saving education depends upon free common schools, and can be produced by nothing else.

Such is a brief summary of the labors of Mr. Mann in his native state, but the impulse given to education has not been confined to Massachusetts. At this moment there is not, probably, a state in the Union which has not been moved, and which is not looking up to Massachusetts for direction and encouragement. The states from Maine to Texas are blessed, or to be blessed, by the example and recorded labors of Massachusetts; and while we allow something to the cooperation of many worthy minds, and many noble hearts, who does not know, who is not willing to confess, that all this is mainly the work of Horace Mann? <sup>16</sup>

His valedictory to the teachers as editor of *The Common School Journal* clearly shows that he considered his entrance into the legislative field as merely transferring his work to a different place. In taking leave, he sets forth his attitude,

<sup>16</sup> *Boston Transcript*, December 18, 1848.

saying his motto used to be, "The cause of education, the first of all causes." The changing national events force the acceptance of the "great truth, that before a man can be educated, he must be a free man." His mission, therefore, was to secure the *freedom of man*. He concludes: "It is no alienation, therefore, from the cause of education, but only to secure a sphere where education may 'run and be glorified' that occasions this apparent departure from my long-loved field of labor. Than these causes, what can be nobler? For these causes who would not be willing to fall, though he should fall like Arnold of Winkelreid, at the battle of Sempach—his body 'a sheaf of spears?'" <sup>17</sup>

With a keen sense of neutrality as long as he remained secretary of the Board, he did not engage in political speaking in Massachusetts until he had entirely withdrawn from the office of secretary, confining his activities in Congress to his legislative affairs in Washington, although importuned by friends to give addresses, and although he knew that it was a sacrifice politically to keep silent.

In resigning from his field of labor as secretary, he had said: "My hand may be taken from it; but not my heart." That his words were not an empty sentiment is evidenced by others written just a few months before his death eleven years later, when in reply to an invitation to attend the first convention of normal schools in America, he said: "Public schools were my first love; they will be my last."

<sup>17</sup> *The Common School Journal*, Vol. X, pages 383-384, December 15, 1848.



## CHAPTER XIV

### CHAMPION OF FREEDOM

WHEN Mann's term as state senator had expired some months after he had assumed his duties as secretary of the Board, he had entered in his personal journal: "Till today my senatorial life lasts; today it ends. With good sleep I shall wake up unsenatorial. So be it. I would not exchange this life, toilsome, anxious, doubtful as it is and may be, to be at the head of the 'grave and reverend' senators tomorrow. Probably I am breathing the last few political breaths I shall ever respire."<sup>1</sup> He probably did not even dream that in less than a dozen years the turn of events again would launch him on a legislative career as a member of the National Congress.

When he was elected to this body as the successor of Mr. Adams, he realized that he was to succeed one who had made a distinguished record and whose name was on the lips in every household in his state. In reply to an inquiry as to whether he would accept the nomination if it were proffered him, he had written that to ask any one in the district to *fill* Mr. Adams' place was a "good deal like asking a mouse to fill the skin of an elephant."

Mr. Adams, former president of the United States, had been serving in the lower house of Congress as the representative from his district. In the reform wave and the movement for extending human rights Massachusetts had been a leader among the states; his district, the home of Daniel

<sup>1</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Journal*, entry, January 2, 1838.

Webster, was the center of the agitation. Adams had been elected to Congress as a Whig; when Mann was taking office as secretary, he was presenting petitions on the slave question in the national body. In 1839 he recorded that he had presented ninety-five petitions that year; in the following twelve months he handled more than five hundred. His ceaseless pounding away on this one idea could not fail to attract attention to the subject and to secure action. Boston had a profitable trade with the South; the majority of the wealthy and socially prominent were bitterly hostile to him and his ideas. Although he was deserted by the élite and the financial leaders, he was supported by the farmers and workingmen, the same groups who had supported Mann and the Board of Education. Adams had championed the cause of abolition and had early noted a "great fermentation" on the slavery question. He waged war against the spread of the slavery system and fought stubbornly to win the right of petition and freedom of speech on that carefully avoided and forbidden subject.

Mann had known President Adams, for a quarter of a century, had been his warm friend, and appreciated well his intellectual and forensic powers. He knew, too, the high expectations which had been aroused in him as Adams' successor. He entered Congress under disadvantageous circumstances. Taking up his duties in the middle of the session, he had come "into the school when the class had got half way through the book"; it was difficult, as he said, for him to plunge effectively into the work of the unexpired term which he was chosen to fill. When, ten days after his election, he arrived in Washington to enter the legislative halls of the capital city, he was still filling the routine duties of the secretary of the Board, editing *The Common School Journal*, and was obligated to prepare his final annual report. To

these tasks were added the heavy obligations of the legislative session, the defense of clients in an important slavery case, and the duties relating to the interests of his own congressional district.

Slavery was the dominant subject under consideration in Congress. It was a day of giants in the legislative halls. Seated as lawmakers at the time were Webster, Calhoun, Clay; Benton, Corwin, Douglas, Chase; Cass, Seward, Giddings, and Alexander Stevens. No mere pigmy could hope to make an impression amidst such a galaxy of stars in the political firmament. For several months, therefore, as a mere freshman in Congress, he bided his time, meanwhile steeping his mind in the legal aspects of the one subject on the minds and lips of all, determined to speak only after thorough preparation.

During these early days he chafed under the onerous duties of his new office and the obscurity of his part in the events. His unrest is shown in his letters. "It is not a life at all congenial to me," he says. "The great question of freedom or slavery is the only one worthy to keep me here. If I had the means of living, even in a scanty way, I should be greatly tempted to forswear Congress forever." Again he confided: "Nothing but the spirit of a missionary will ever reconcile me to Congress." To his friend, Cyrus Pierce, he wrote: "I have not the slightest expectation of ever feeling any attachment for the position. . . . From present appearances I have not run away from correspondence on schools and education, but into it. I may have an opportunity to do unseen work in this behalf—even greater than I have ever done before. I have seen enough already to give me even a deeper conviction of the necessity and indispensable-ness of education than I ever had before. It is the only name whereby a republic can be saved. If I ever return to the field,

as I hope to, I shall return with new motives for exertion and zeal." At the end of his first half term, he wistfully and disappointedly writes: "You do not know how homesick and statesick I am—that is, how I long to get back among the boys and girls of the Massachusetts schools."

In Washington he did not engage in social life. Except for one winter of his five years in the city, his family remained in West Newton. Absorbed with the stirring questions of the day, he found little relish for mere pleasure. Then, too, he was soon known as an ardent and determined foe of slavery, and as such, was unacceptable to the social leaders of the South who at the time dominated the gayer life of the capital. To preserve his health and to furnish a respite from official duties, every morning and evening he took exercise at the woodpile.

Mann was no mere officeholder. He had come to Washington to accomplish a purpose—because he saw imperiled one of the most fundamental rights of man—that of liberty. It would have been strange, for one possessed of his oratorical powers, to remain quiet when a cause dear to his heart was at stake. A few months after he began his term of service, on June 30, 1848, the eleventh anniversary of the date on which he had accepted the secretaryship in Massachusetts, he launched a new attack to break the shackles which were binding the human spirit, this time against the institution of slavery, using as the subject of his address before the House, "Slavery in the Territories." In it he assumed the clear right of Congress to legislate on the subject of slavery for the territories. His arguments were based upon the wisdom and expediency of exerting the power. He warned of financial and economic impotency under a system of slavery, which destroys ambition in the people. The slave works, he continued, from *fear* rather than from hope. He

is kept in ignorance, and uneducated labor is unprofitable labor economically. Increased wages are a concomitant of increased intelligence. Slave labor can never compete with free labor. Slavery, runs his reasoning, makes the universal education of whites impossible, since common schools cannot exist where the population is sparse. In 1840 statistics showed that there were eight times as many pupils in the primary schools of the free states as of the slave states, New York alone having two and a half times as many and Ohio more than equaling the number in the fifteen slave states and territories. In the slave states one person in every ten was illiterate; in the free states only one in one hundred and fifty, the ratio in the slave states being over ten times as large. Slavery, he finds, is the great enemy of the universal public school. "It is as impossible for free, thorough, universal education to coexist with slavery as for two bodies to occupy the same space at the same time. Slavery would abolish education, if it should invade a free state; education would abolish slavery, if it *could* invade a slave state." Contrasting the common schools of the North with the private schools of the South, he declares: "The free schools of the North lead to the common diffusion of knowledge, and the equalization of society. The private schools of the South divide men into patricians and plebeians; so that, in the latter, a nuisance grows out of education itself." The library, as a means of education and enlightenment, is similarly affected. The state of New York has more than a million volumes in the school district libraries, while in the whole South, if four or five cities are excluded, "all the libraries in the public schools of the slave states could be carried in a schoolboy's satchel." Only one fiftieth as many books are printed in the South as are published in the North.

How reminiscent are these views on education of his



description of the English schools in the *Seventh Annual Report*, how descriptive of his fundamental philosophy of universal education. No matter on what subject he writes he is still the educationalist:

Out of universal education came genius, skill, and enterprise, and the desire of bettering one's condition. Industry and frugality are their concomitants. Diversified labor secures a home market. Diligence earns much, but the absence of the vices of indolence saves more. Hence comforts abound, while capital accumulates. . . . All the higher institutions of learning and religion can be liberally supported. These institutions impart an elevated and moral tone to society. Hence efforts for all kinds of social ameliorations. Temperance societies spring up. Societies for preventing crime; for saving from pauperism; for the reform of prisons and the reformation of prisoners; for peace; for sending missionaries to the heathen; for diffusing the gospel,—all these, where a sound education is given, grow up, in the order of Providence, as an oak grows out of an acorn.<sup>2</sup>

He concludes with a severe indictment of slavery on moral grounds.

His vigorous philippic met with instant and fulsome praises. Newspapers were generous in their comment. Complimentary letters came to him from Sumner, Josiah Quincy, George B. Emerson, and Theodore Parker. This and his later speeches on the same subject made fast friends of the reform group, but hostile and bitter opponents of others who did not share his views. It was Mann's stand in Congress which was primarily responsible for his friendship with Theodore Parker and for his frequent correspondence with him. Mr. Parker, that reformer of reformers, antiwar, antiliquor, anti-hanging, antislavery, was snubbed by the leaders of Boston society, although with a library of more than twenty

<sup>2</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Slavery: Letters and Speeches*, pages 49-50. Boston, 1851.

thousand books and pamphlets he was one of the city's best-informed and best-educated citizens. Men with humanitarian interests, such as he had, always found much to applaud in the speeches and activities of such zealous reformers as Mann was.

Mann continued his interest in educational and humanitarian reforms in the broader fields while at Washington. He entered Congress, hopeful that a national department of education might be set up in the President's cabinet. He was a firm supporter of Dorothea Dix in her efforts in behalf of prison reforms. But his Congressional career was dominated by his interest in behalf of human freedom. During his five years as legislator he delivered five antislavery addresses on the subject of restricting the introduction of slavery into the territories, the Fugitive Slave Law, and slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia. Through them all, as through other writings of the period, there breathes a high regard for the principle of liberty and a hatred of oppression. A reviewer of his volume of addresses on slavery<sup>3</sup> comments: "The arrows of truth are sometimes sent with needless fierceness and force, and with their points dipped in poison, without which they might have done their work quite effectually. . . . We can but think that there is a little unnecessary mangling in some of Mr. Mann's decapitating and limb-chopping, though many of these operations are performed with rare skill and a terrible professional coolness. . . . It is a whole armory of keen and powerful arguments against oppression."<sup>4</sup> In an age of compromises in Congress, Mann uncompromisingly opposed with all his strength any suggestion of truce with those who did not see eye to eye with him on the slavery question.

<sup>3</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Slavery: Letters and Speeches*. Boston, 1851.

<sup>4</sup> Newspaper clipping, unlocated, among the effects of Benjamin Pickman Mann, Antioch College Library.

In July the public was aroused by the famous case of Daniel Drayton, indicted for "stealing and carrying away, in the schooner Pearl" a cargo of seventy slaves from the District of Columbia. Financed by northern abolitionists, Captain Drayton chartered a small boat and went to Washington to assist the slaves to escape. The vessel, caught in a storm as it was sailing down the Potomac, was captured and Drayton, the leader in the plot, and Sayres, owners of the boat, were brought back to Washington to be placed in jail. Joshua Giddings, antislavery congressman from Ohio, went to them and gave assurance that they would be supported and protected. In Boston a meeting of protest was held in Faneuil Hall, and a committee was appointed to defend the prisoners. Mann, Seward, and S. P. Chase came forward and offered their services for the purpose, but at the last minute Seward and Chase were prevented from assisting because of other legal engagements. Joshua Giddings, Benjamin Wade, Horace Greeley, among others were supporters of the defense movement; but it seemed unwise for them to act in the capacity of attorneys as their own intimate connection with the cause of abolition would prejudice a Washington jury against them and militate against the prisoners. It was at the urgent request of Sumner and Howe, his close friends, that Mann consented to defend them, despite the fact that he was just assuming his congressional office and was still serving as secretary of the Board of Education. The trial was long and dragged out through the hot August. After a hearing in a criminal court and a retrial before the circuit court, each of the defendants were sentenced to pay a fine of \$10,000. Against oppressive summer heat, "in a Tophet called a courtroom" with armed slaveholders in court daily, with hostile sympathizers with the slavery cause as a background, Mann had stood like the rock of Gibraltar

for the black man's rights. He gave himself without reserve, because he felt he was not working for Drayton and Sayres alone but for the "whole colored race."

In September, 1848, Mann was unanimously nominated as the congressional candidate of the Free Soil Party from the Eighth Massachusetts District. A few days later there was added the unanimous endorsement of the Whigs. With such generous and sturdy support, he was easily re-elected by a handsome majority. More and more he was leaning towards the Free Soil Party. This new organization had begun in 1848, with Harvard graduates and professors active in its promotion. Among the leaders were Charles Sumner; Charles Francis Adams, brother-in-law of Edward Everett; Richard Henry Dana; James Russell Lowell; and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Their slogan, "Free soil, free labor, free speech, free men," had all the elements of appeal to one of Mann's character. From the beginning Sumner strongly urged Mann to come out openly in behalf of the new party. But, though emphatically antislavery, he retained his independence and refrained from identifying himself with the extremists. For him, politics, merely as a game, had no interest; but politics, as a means of human betterment, had a strong appeal. Such men as Sumner, Garrison, and Wendell Phillips lost patience with him, because they thought him lukewarm and lacking sufficient aggressiveness in the cause. But he could not be crowded into precipitate action. He still believed that a more conservative course was wisest. After President Taylor was elected, Mann supported him as long as he could conscientiously do so in the hope that his position on slavery would be satisfactory, although Sumner and Howe, as Free Soilers, thought it was his duty to come out in open opposition.

Without doubt Mann's sympathies were gradually leaning

more and more toward the Free Soilers. In a letter to Howe, November 4, 1849, he had written that his adherence to their principles was as strong as ever. While attending the legislative sessions in Washington he used to meet with a little group of Free Soilers at the home of Gamaliel Bailey, the editor of the *National Era*. Close friends and members of the group who spent their evenings together were Giddings, Seward, Chase, Hale, Julian, Mann, and a small group of others.<sup>5</sup> At this early time membership in a Free Soil group was a cause for reproach which closed the doors to the society of Washington, as the important public offices were held by their opponents.

In February, 1849, in his second speech in Congress, Mann opposed slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia. Like the first, and others to follow, it was well received. It was no doubt inspired, at least in part, by the events growing out of the Drayton case. The remainder of the year was devoted largely to legislative duties and in opposition to slavery, but some time was found for educational endeavors. In October Mann served as the presiding officer at a meeting of the *Friends of Education*, attended by practical teachers and by those who held important official positions under the state governments as superintendents of public instruction. During the days the meeting was in session, Mann was offered the presidency of Girard College with an attractive salary of \$3,000 and house, but declined the position. The Friends of Education organized into a permanent national convention, and Mann was chosen to issue a call for another convention to be held the following year. When he issued it he took the occasion to reaffirm his views regarding the common schools as an agency of universal education:

<sup>5</sup> CLARKE, JAMES FREEMAN—*Autobiography, Diary, and Correspondence*. Published by Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.



There has never been a period in the history of man, when universal education was so imperative a duty as at the present moment. . . . The common affairs of life require a hundred times more knowledge than they did a century ago . . . the masses of the people are investing themselves, or are becoming invested with new social and political prerogatives. . . . What we call civilization and progress have increased temptation a thousand fold:—in this country ten thousand fold.

In conclusion he calls upon the friends of education whom he designates as “effective guides and reformers of mankind who act upon youth and adolescence” to assemble to make plans for the enlargement and increased effectiveness of their work.

On March 4, 1850, just at the middle of his term as representative in the Thirty-first Congress, Mann had written to his wife that Webster, senator from Massachusetts, was expected to speak in the Senate in reply to Calhoun and added: “I do not believe he will compromise the great question. He will have too much regard for his *historic* character and for his consistency to do any such thing; at least, I hope so.” To his amazement Webster in his famous seventh of March speech did the unexpected—he compromised. As a rhetorical effort, Mann considered the speech a masterpiece possessed of “clearness of style, weight of statement, power of language.” But Mann was crushed. He now looked upon Webster as a deserter from an army fighting in a great cause. In a letter home to his wife, he said: “. . . he is a fallen star!—Lucifer descended from heaven! . . . His intellectual life has been one great epic, and now he has given a vile catastrophe to its closing pages. He has walked for years among the gods, to descend from the empyrean heights, and mingle with mimes and apes! I am overwhelmed.” He attributed Webster’s course to his ambition; he had betrayed

the cause, thinking of the Presidency. "But," he continues, "Mr. Webster never can be President of the United States; never, never! He will lose two friends at the North where he will gain one at the South." <sup>6</sup>

When the speech was read in Massachusetts Mann's constituents were aroused and asked him to address them on the issues involved. Instead he issued a letter of more than forty pages, going into detail on Webster's conduct.<sup>7</sup> He showed his inconsistencies and his desertion from the principles he formerly held and in which he had reflected the opinions of his constituents.

Webster, hitherto unused to opposition and chagrined that a junior legislator would dare to attack him and thus violate the rules of congressional custom and usage, angrily replied. Then, as now, disloyalty to party and fellow incumbents in office was a deadly political sin. Webster and his friends swore vengeance against him and determined to punish him by preventing his return to Congress the ensuing term. When the combat was at its height General Taylor died, and his successor in office appointed Webster Secretary of State, giving him immense political power through the control of patronage. Let Mann describe his own changed political situation in his own words:

"The cause of freedom was doomed. Thousands saw what the event would be, and rushed to the conclusion. Three fifths of all the Whig presses went over in a day. The word of command went forth to annihilate me; and, if it was not done, it was for no want of good feeling or effort on the part of the hired executioners. From having been complimented on all sides, I was misrepresented, maligned, travestied, on all sides. Not a single Whig paper in Boston defended me. Most of them had an article or

<sup>6</sup> Letter to Mrs. Mary Mann, March 8, 1850. *Mann Papers*.

<sup>7</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Slavery: Letters and Speeches*, pages 236-281. Boston, 1851.

more against me every day. The convention to nominate my successor was packed by fraudulent means, and I was thrown overboard. . . . To bring the *odium theologicum* to crush me, an evangelical was taken as my opponent."

However the Free Soil Party, by a communication through Charles Francis Adams, sent him notification of his unanimous nomination to succeed himself and expressed their sympathy with him in his trials in the performance of his duties. He accepted, took the stump, and appealed to independent voters face to face, with the result that he was re-elected by a "handsome majority." To Mann it was not a personal victory, but a vindication of the principles for which he had stood. He had not intended to run for re-election; but when he saw himself and the cause under attack, he concluded to make the race despite the severe handicap under which he was a candidate. The political Rubicon had now been crossed, and Mann had become definitely and openly a Free Soiler.

The congressional session of 1851 was one of political intrigue in Congress. To a degree Mann was favorable to General Scott, the candidate of the Whigs, but he had lost sympathy with, and was wearied of, political affairs. His whole family had gone to Washington to live with him, his own home being occupied by Nathaniel Hawthorne and family. A considerable portion of his time, during the latter part of this session, was consumed in lecturing on temperance, education, and loyalty to the divine laws of nature in New York, Ohio, Michigan, and Illinois.

The hostility of Webster and his friends pursued Mann; on September 11, 1852, a letter was addressed to the voters of his district in which he declined to be a candidate to succeed himself in Congress. He saw the hopelessness of his position. He expressed the belief that the party and the

people had retreated on the slavery question and had abandoned the principles for which he had stood, and was continuing to stand.<sup>8</sup>

In September, 1852, he was nominated for the governorship of Massachusetts by the Free Soil Party. Anson Burlingame paid him a glowing tribute in a speech before the nominating convention:

As to the candidate we have nominated, I shall say nothing but that his fame is as wide as the universe. It was my fortune to be, some time since, in Guildhall, London, when a debate was going on. The question was whether they should instruct their representatives in favor of secular education. They voted that they would not do it. But a gentleman then rose and read some statistics from one of the reports of the Hon. Horace Mann. That extract reversed the vote of the Common Council of London. I have never felt prouder of my country. I call upon the young men of the Commonwealth, who have grown up under the inspiration of his free schools, to sustain their champion, and to carry his name over the hills and through the pleasant valleys of Massachusetts during the present canvass with that enthusiasm which shall result in a glorious victory.

He made a valiant fight but received only thirty thousand votes as against fifty thousand for the Whig victor.

With his defeat, Mann's political life was destined to close. He occupied an anomalous position. After leaving Congress, he was severely criticized by William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips for his lukewarmness; he was just as severely attacked by others because he was too intent upon his reforms. It does not serve our purpose to narrate at length the bitter exchanges made in a wordy battle which, in intensity of feeling at least, resembled that of his conflict with the Boston schoolmasters.

<sup>8</sup> *Dedham Gazette*, Saturday, September 11, 1852.

Were his educational contributions not so outstanding, there is no doubt that his career as a statesman would now receive larger attention than is accorded it. First and foremost, in Congress as well as out, he was thought of in connection with his educational endeavors. Respected for these among the statesmen, on other matters he was looked upon as a pedagogue lecturing them as he would lecture bad boys in the schoolroom. But in education his counsels were gladly sought. Scarcely a congressman who had not evidence in his own state of the transformations which had been made in the common schools under the educational influence which had permeated from Massachusetts to every corner of the Union. Mann's stirring narratives of the awfulness of slavery and his clarion calls in the service of freedom were the outgrowth of his humanness and his humanity, as expressed in his educational service. Just before departing for Ohio, September 19, 1853, to accept his last educational position as president of a newly established college, he had stopped to address the Free Soil Convention at Fitchburg. He was shown every honor. His sturdy character and firm stand in the paths of duty as he saw them were well expressed by the chairman of the meeting as he uttered these valedictory remarks:

HORACE MANN—WHETHER STANDING BENEATH THE RISING OR THE SETTING SUN, THE RAYS OF THAT SPLENDID LUMINARY WILL SHINE UPON NOTHING THAT IS NOT AS BRILLIANT AND AS SPOTLESS AS THEMSELVES.



## CHAPTER XV

### ANTIOCH—THE LAST SIX YEARS

AS early as March 9, 1852, almost six months before he was nominated as a candidate for the governorship, Mann had been requested to become the president of a new college just then being contemplated. A year and a half earlier the Christian denomination had taken preliminary steps to establish a college for their denomination. They required assent to no creed but the Bible, which each man was free to interpret for himself. The only requisite for admission to membership in the church was evidence of a Christian life. It was their aim to found a college of high rank open on terms of equality to students of both sexes. The name had been suggested by the words of Acts xi: 26: "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." In the beginning it was the plan to build the institution in the state of New York, "somewhere on the thoroughfare between Albany and Buffalo." But by October, 1851, it had become evident that the Ohio men had far exceeded those in other areas in the amount of money pledged; early in 1852 it was decided to locate it in a village of Southwestern Ohio, called Yellow Springs.

This was a village of four hundred inhabitants, famed for its springs, impregnated with iron, to which, from early days, Tecumseh and his warriors were accustomed to come to drink. The climate was said to be healthful and it was well-known as a summer watering place to which invalids and others came for rest and recreation. It was also a famous

political meeting ground where Webster, Clay, Van Buren, Edward Everett, and other leaders in American life had spoken.

As it was the first of the colleges founded by the Christian denomination, the trustees were anxious to secure a president who would give it prestige. No educator of the day was better known than Mann. His fame was not only national, but international. It is little wonder that he was sought as the director and leader of the new enterprise. It is a great wonder that, at the age of fifty-six, he was interested in starting a new work in another state. The outlook was anything but flattering. Funds for the support of the proposed institution, at least in part, were to be secured through the sale of scholarships, valued at one hundred dollars each, and entitling the owners to their perpetual use for one student without tuition charge. This arrangement was to become a veritable millstone as the institution developed, because there would be less and less paying students. The denomination lacked a strong educational tradition. Then, too, the environment was in marked contrast with the culture of Boston to which Mann was accustomed. It does not cast any reflection upon the state or the village to record the fact that conditions in the Mississippi Valley more than three quarters of a century ago were comparatively primitive, when judged in terms of the East, and especially as compared with Massachusetts with two centuries of educational tradition in common schools and higher education behind it. Catherine Beecher, who had lived and taught for a time in Cincinnati and who knew Ohio well, wrote during the summer of 1852: "That Antioch is a beautiful place! I have spent many pleasant hours there as a summer watering place. But ah! These western colleges with their strange medley of [the] raw, ignorant—not one tenth of whom will stay over a year

and will go off unlamented! And oh, oh, the legion of cares, perplexities, changes, and disappointments. You see, if you are to go, it will not be my fault if you are not 'forewarned' and 'forearmed.' ” Two days later Mann wrote to his wife: “Miss Beecher prays that if I ever want any more comfort in this life, I will not try to build up a college at the West, and says that Mr. Stowe held up his hands in deprecation at the thought. So you see what persons who *know* think of our prospects.” Mann himself fully realized the contrast in conditions between the East and the West. He had written several years earlier: “So far as common school education is concerned, the West is now a denser, darker, and more aboriginal wilderness, than it was a natural one in 1775, when Boone camped at a place in what is now Kentucky, and which he called Lexington in honor of Lexington in Massachusetts, where the first revolutionary blood had just been spilt.” <sup>1</sup>

Mann had spent several weeks traveling in Ohio, “The New England of the West,” in 1840, and he had lectured there while he was serving as a member of Congress, so that he had first-hand knowledge of the conditions which had to be met. He doubtless foresaw firm friendships there, which would further be cemented, as some of the men he admired most in Congress, such as Giddings, Chase, and Sherman, were from that state. He saw potentialities as well as disadvantages in the state, too, as it was the third largest state in the Union; Cincinnati, not far from the proposed seat of Antioch, was one of the largest cities of the West. After his return, ten years before, he had enthusiastically written of the Mississippi Valley as the “most beautiful portion of the globe,” which had “great beauties of nature.” With a large production and people possessed of “power and

<sup>1</sup> *The Common School Journal*, August 15, 1846.

responsibility" he saw an opportunity for a new era in the destinies of the race through "the power of high, thorough, moral, universal education," and he saw the "mighty valley of the West" as the "theatre which Providence seems to have selected"<sup>2</sup> for the solution of the problem. That he continued to appreciate the inherent possibilities of the region is attested by his response when he was invested with his office as president. In closing his words of acceptance he had said: "Wherever the capital of the United States may be, this valley will be the seat of empire. No other valley—the Danube, the Ganges, the Nile, or the Amazon—is ever to exert so formative an influence as this upon the destinies of men; and therefore, in civil polity, in ethics, in studying and obeying the laws of God, it must ascend to the contemplation of a future and enduring reign of beneficence and peace."<sup>3</sup> While there were many drawbacks, there were also glorious opportunities. Though it is often said that Mann accepted the position in ignorance of the true situation in the West, it seems clear that, fully aware of the difficulties and perplexities, he also envisioned the limitless possibilities in the rapidly rising West. When one has reached the age of fifty-seven, as Mann had, and is without a position, such a challenge as the presidency offered to him does not usually fall on deaf ears.

On September 15 he was formally elected to the presidency. On the same date his niece and nephew, among others, were chosen as members of the faculty. His own salary was fixed at \$2,000, per annum, considerably less than had been at first expected. He acquiesced whole-heartedly, saying that "the moral side of the question has gone up more than the pecuniary has fallen down."

<sup>2</sup> *The Common School Journal*, February 15, 1843.

<sup>3</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Inaugural Address*, page 13. Yellow Springs, Ohio, 1854.

The first faculty meeting was held about the first of November, 1852, at Mann's home in West Newton, the members from the West having gone to Massachusetts for the purpose. A curriculum was drawn up, the teaching assignments were made, and three additional instructors were provided for. Several days were occupied by the faculty in making the plans; there was general harmony and unity of thought regarding the policies which the new institution was to follow. The President writes: "I found a most remarkable coincidence of opinion and sentiment among the persons present, not only as to theory, but in practical matters. . . . We were all teetotalers; all antitobacco men; all antislavery men; a majority of us believers in phrenology; all antiemulation men—that is, all against any system of rewards and prizes designed to withdraw the mind from a comparison of itself with a standard of excellence, and to substitute a rival for that standard. We agreed entirely in regard to religious and chapel exercises, etc. The meeting was very satisfactory, and has raised my hopes very much as to the ultimate success of the enterprise." <sup>4</sup>

The next September found him ready to bid adieu to the state and friends he knew so well, and to take up his residence in his strange and new home almost a thousand miles away. When he had built his home in West Newton he expected to spend his last days there, but now all plans had to be changed. He was to part with his bosom friends, "his brain relations," and with the Boston he had known for decades. He had had many severe trials in Massachusetts, but he had also had his conquests and joys. He had had friends capable of great friendships, as well as enemies sworn to defeat him and his purposes. But despite bitter hostility and opposition, it was home! When he was finally

<sup>4</sup> Letter to Austin Craig. November 8, 1852. *Mann Papers*.



ready to cut the ties with his own New England and enter upon his journey and as he bade his goodbyes to the last friend who had accompanied him for a part of the way, he broke down and wept bitterly.

At least in some respects the prospect at the college was alluring. He went as a layman, probably "the first instance in all the West where a layman has ever been elected to this office." Prior to his election the colleges generally had looked to the clerical ranks for their presidents, and usually, from the nature of the case, to orthodox clergy. He felt it was a great gain to educational progress that this tradition had been broken in this instance and predicted that there would be other nonclerical presidents at other institutions later.

He was given an opportunity to teach subjects which he enjoyed and relished and through which he could express the ideas which would reform society. One must smile at the number of different subjects that were on his schedule, all in addition to his other duties. They were political economy, intellectual and moral philosophy, constitutional law, and natural theology. In them he could bring together his views on religion, morals, phrenology, and civil and governmental matters—all in a world view.

The college was to be coeducational. In the East men and women were customarily educated in separate institutions. Mann, however, had always strongly supported the movement for improving education for women, and had friends like Catherine Beecher, who were interested in "ladies seminaries." He had favored and strongly urged the employment of women in the common schools; when the normal schools were established, two of the three were coeducational from the beginning. On a lecture tour of Western New York he had learned of at least two colleges which were coeduca-

tional. In a letter to his friend, Howe, in March, 1852, he had written: "At Lima, fourteen miles from here, where I spent two days, they have a college, with an earnest faculty of young men, and a full curriculum of studies, where young ladies are going through the whole course, *pari passu*, with the young men. . . . At McGrawville, in this state, too, they have another, which is open not only to both sexes but to all colors." He added this significant comment: "I find men and women both, in this state, and even West, in Ohio, etc., far more interested in the subject of female education than they are in Massachusetts." <sup>5</sup> It is likely that he had learned of the colleges in Ohio on various earlier visits to that state. Oberlin had already been established on a coeducational basis in 1833; Otterbein had followed in 1846; Heidelberg (Ohio), in 1850; so when the doors at Antioch were thrown open, the movement for coeducation, already well begun, was accentuated. Coeducation at this early time, just as now, had its strength in the Middle West and West. Just why this development came so early and so strongly in western New York and Ohio is obscure. One authority has suggested that the spirit of economy played a considerable part, since both sexes could be educated more cheaply in one institution. Perhaps an additional reason was the freer spirit of democracy exhibited in the frontier areas. From the first Mann insisted that women be given equal rights in the new institution in all respects, even to the extent of having women represented as members of the faculty. After five years trial he was confirmed in his view, arguing that the mingling of the sexes was mutually advantageous, the young ladies refining the manners of the young men, and the young men providing "balance" for the young ladies by expelling all

<sup>5</sup> Letter to G. B. S. Howe, March 11, 1852, dated, Genesee, New York. *Mann Papers*.

"girlish romance" and by removing from them any temptation to novel reading.

After his term of service in Massachusetts schools, it would have been strange were Horace Mann to have been interested in becoming the president of a college which was sectarian. We have only to remember his vigorous struggles and bitter quarrels with the various denominational sects in Massachusetts to realize how foreign to his views such a course would have been. One of the strong appeals which the plan for the college had made to him was that there was to be freedom in theological matters. In fact, it was an ideal rather than a realization. Very soon after entering upon his duties as president, he had united with the local congregation and at once engaged actively in its work. It is difficult to reconcile Mann's usually liberal views with his restricted conception of nonsectarianism. In Massachusetts he had considered his career as a "twelve year's struggle to imbue the public mind with an understanding, not merely of the law, but of the spirit of religious liberty." He found the ministry thoroughly indoctrinated with the views of their respective denominations. "The people of the West," he said, "were open, receptive, and mouldable," but the ministers had a "cast-iron epidermis." He considered the establishment of Antioch, free from "old school theology" as "breaking a hole in the wall and letting in the light of religious civilization where it never had shone before." He deplored the fact that the great state of Ohio, which had more than two millions of inhabitants, had only one Unitarian society. His nonsectarianism extended only to the orthodox group. But we must interpret his stand in the light of his own times. Without doubt he considered his own views true, the orthodox, false. He did emphasize the use of thought in religion, and deplored the existence of narrow sects, predicting that the day

would sometime come when the various denominational bodies would pass out of existence and all unite in a single religious group.

These were the ideals of the college which opened October 5, 1853. The inauguration of the college with Mr. Mann as president was an outstanding event. More than three thousand thronged the grounds for the exercises, many of whom,



*Courtesy Antioch College*

ANTIOCH COLLEGE IN 1854

having come the day before and being without shelter, had slept in carriages. All were eager to hear the words of this famed educator from the East. His inaugural address, printed by the college, attracted widespread and favorable attention. He felt the glory of the occasion, but no less the responsibility. He pictured this Western country as a land increasing in its wealth beyond anything known in ancient or modern times. Even so, its resources when compared with



those as yet undeveloped, are comparable to "only the pocket money of a school-boy." Growth must be directed in right channels. "Without the refining influences of education, wealth grows coarse in its manners, beast-like in its pleasures, vulgar and wicked in its ambitions. Without the liberalizing and uplifting power of education, wealth grows overweening in its vanity, cruel in its pride, and contemptible in its ignorance. Without the Christian element in education, wealth grows selfish in the domestic circle, tyrannical in the state, benighted and bigoted in the church, and everywhere impious toward God." <sup>6</sup> In this classic address of more than a hundred printed pages he portrayed at length his own conception of education. Antioch was to be dedicated to "the honor of God and the service of man." Painting a panorama of the rise of civilization with bold strokes he sketched the path which had to be followed to secure future progress. For the college to act upon all the interests of society by acting on youth, he believed it necessary for youth to have superior physical, intellectual, and moral endowments. To play a part on the stage of life one must have "A body, grown from its elemental beginning, in health . . . rejuvenant amid the frosts of age. . . . A mind, as strong for the immortal as is the body for the mortal life; alike enlightened by the wisdom and beacons by the errors of the past. . . . And then a moral nature, presiding like a divinity over the whole . . . transfigured and rapt by the sovereign and sublime aspiration to know and do the will of God."

The address was impressive, and scholarly. Thomas Starr King wrote from Boston in commendation: "There is enough vitality in your inaugural to make a college thrive in Sodom." The college had been launched on its career under most favorable conditions. The next morning candidates were ex-

<sup>6</sup> MANN, HORACE—*Inaugural Address*, page 16. Yellow Springs, Ohio, 1854.



amined for admission. Of the one hundred and fifty candidates only eight were found sufficiently prepared to enter the freshman class. To present-day college students it would have seemed a strange group. There were young and old, husbands and wives, farmers, ministers who had resigned from their churches, and children of eminent men, all drawn by the name of their famed leader. An examination of the first catalogue for the year 1853-54 shows six men and two women in the freshman class, with three hundred and twenty-five in the preparatory school. At least fourteen states were represented in the student body, ranging from Massachusetts to California, from Wisconsin to Louisiana.

Now that the serious work of the college had to be put under way, difficulties arose. The physical condition of the plant was disappointing. When Mann had agreed to come to Ohio, it had been understood that all was to be in readiness for the opening. Circumstances beyond control of the authorities prevented. The college site was on a plain just lately cleared of forest. Buildings were incomplete, and despite the promise which had been made, the president's house had not been built. There were no fences around the campus, halls had no doors, and it was no uncommon sight to see pigs walking through the dining room, there being no hindrance to their entry. Mann had come to a pioneer land, with pioneer conditions to face.

From the first he had planned a four-year curriculum, equal to the best anywhere. Standards for admission and graduation were made high. In each year, except the last, there were elective studies. Seniors were required to study astronomy, geology, and mineralogy; philosophy, rhetoric and religion; and history of civilization and constitutional law. Physiology was required it is claimed for the first time in any college. Theory and practice of teaching was offered

as an elective study in the junior year. Following the lead of the theories of teaching expounded in the *Seventh Annual Report*, oral teaching was given a large place and exclusive reliance on textbooks was discouraged. We will let Mann describe the situation in his own words:

On coming to Antioch College, in October last, we found nothing in readiness but our own hearts. The weather was cold, but there was not a fireplace nor a stove in the whole establishment. We had only our love of the cause to keep us warm; but this, though very good in morals, is very bad in physiology. A room had been set apart for a library, but there was not a book in it, nor a shelf on which to put one. . . . We had not a blackboard, nor a schoolchair, nor a school-desk for any student, nor any habitable schoolroom, or recitation room. Our first examination for the admission of about two hundred students, we were obliged to hold in our dining-hall. We cleared off the breakfast dishes from the tables in the morning (for we conduct all our examinations for admission in writing), and when noon came we had to clear away pen, ink and paper for dinner; and, after dinner, to clear away the dishes for examination again; so that, at first, over the dining-tables of our commons' hall, the cook and the professor held undivided empire. I doubt whether the dining-tables of any college were ever promoted to such an honor before; and for one I sincerely hope they may have borne that honor for the last time.<sup>7</sup>

The general effect is described strikingly by him, when he states: "If Adam and Eve had been brought into this world as prematurely as we were brought on to the premises of Antioch College, they must have been created about Wednesday night!"

The innovations which had been made in establishing Antioch as a nonsectarian and coeducational college have already been noticed. Other policies just as original had been inaugurated. Antioch was the second college in Ohio to admit

<sup>7</sup> Address, *Demands of the Age on Colleges*, delivered before the Christian Convention, Cincinnati, Ohio, October 5, 1854.

Negroes, being preceded only by Oberlin, the pioneer in opening her doors to the colored race.

It was a new departure in higher education when Mann discarded undue emulation as a primary motive force by eliminating honors and prizes. As secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, he had firmly set himself against the use of emulation as an artificial stimulant, believing that children love knowledge and enjoy learning. When a friend in the East offered to give him a gift to establish a prize at the college, he declined it, not willing to employ it for the designated purpose because he held the belief that "emulation makes bright scholars, but rascally men of affairs."

As in so many other matters, so in discipline and moral training, Mann held views in advance of his day and time. These notions were a logical development from those he had held as secretary. While holding that office he believed that much of the harshness and severity of schoolroom discipline could safely be abandoned, and that, except in rare instances, corporal punishment could be replaced by another form of control. Similarly, he now believed that if a greater degree of sympathy and confidence could be developed between the students and faculty, better behavior would be secured and higher ideals would be inculcated. He made it his practice to know and to win the confidence of each student of the college, using it as a means of inspiring him with his own lofty ideals. He deplored the traditional hostility and opposition which college students manifested towards the faculty which made it a code of honor with them to conceal misdoings.<sup>8</sup>

As an outgrowth of his estimate of the importance of the college-trained man and woman in elevating the life of the

<sup>8</sup> MANN, MARY—*Life of Horace Mann*, "Code of Honor, Falsely So Called." Pages 585-596. Boston, 1851.

nation, he insisted that he would never allow any vicious or profligate person to graduate. While he believed that the elements of education ought to be extended universally to all children, in the lower grades of the school he was firmly convinced that when they passed from the common and preparatory schools to the college or university, and especially when they approached graduation, "every applicant should be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, and dignities fit only for the honorable and the virtuous should be everlastingly withheld from the mean and the profligate."<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, no immoral student could ever receive the diploma of the college, which he considered a certificate of character as well as of scholastic attainment.

Perhaps, however, it was through his own personality rather than as a result of his policies that his greatest contribution was made to the life of the college. He spent much time in private, intimate, and confidential conversation with students. He was firm and exacting with them, but was interested in reforming rather than punishing. He trusted them and they responded to the trust. This is why he could and did introduce self-government successfully. His students have left pertinent descriptions of his methods. "He aimed especially to stimulate reflection in his pupils" says one. Another found that "it was in kindling a flame of enthusiasm that he was so incomparable. . . . Truth was always radiant in his eyes." Another was impressed with his gentle spirit: "In reproving the young . . . he was often moved to tears; and the more obdurate the subject, the more deeply he was affected." "It was heaven to see his face," wrote a fourth. Still another, noting his tenderer qualities, said of him: "The world saw him as a stern lion-hearted worker. We who dwelt

<sup>9</sup> Second Baccalaureate Address, *Relation of Common Schools and Colleges*, 1858.

with him as pupils knew him as a kind adviser, as tender and solicitous of our welfare as our own parents."

With such elevated ideals of personal conduct, such substantial and progressive educational policies, it would seem that the president could not fail in his project of building a college equal to the best of the East. But even from the first year difficulties arose, and as years passed, they multiplied. It was not long before religious dissention raised its ugly head. If the college was founded as a nonsectarian institution, it was in a totally different sense from that in which such an institution is now regarded. The suggestion has been made that nothing was said about sectarianism at the original meeting in Marion, New York, at which plans for the new college were projected, but that it became nonsectarian at a later time under the dominance of a liberal group, some of whom at a later time went into the Unitarian Church as ministers.<sup>10</sup> Several years before, in 1844, the more liberal Christians had united with the Unitarians in establishing a theological seminary at Meadville, Pennsylvania. The proposal had evidently been made to Mann that a theological department should now be established at Antioch, for Mann wrote objecting to such action, for the reason both that it would be a competitor of the school at Meadville and that it would be in direct conflict with the policy which had been proclaimed for Antioch.<sup>11</sup>

Before Mann had been in his position two years marked differences of opinion began to arise between the liberal group of whom Mann was the acknowledged leader and the conservatives who became followers of one of the faculty members. After joining the Christian Church, it was Mann's

<sup>10</sup> STRAKER, ROBERT—*Antioch College Bulletin*, pages 6-11, November, 1934.

<sup>11</sup> Letter, Horace Mann to Hon. W. Mills, dated West Newton, August 22, 1853. Copy in Antioch College Library.



custom to teach a Bible class in the church and to open the exercises of the college with prayers each day. He tried to avoid giving offense to either group. But his advanced views were anathema to many, even as they had been in Massachusetts where the liberal position could count on strong support. In the West, where the Unitarian church was almost unknown and where it received little support, it seemed inevitable that he would soon come into conflict with the church leaders of other groups. It is unnecessary at this place to enter into the details of a struggle which is best forgotten, and in which blame undoubtedly rests to some extent on the shoulders of each contending group. Partisanship was strong in that day, and there was little desire to compromise. The differences soon created dissension on the campus as well as outside the college precincts. The faculty member who led the opposition, published a three hundred page volume, purporting to be a history of the college but being really a summary of the position of those opposed to Mann. Mann was forced to enter the arena of argument again. The division in the faculty grew. The local business manager became hostile and encroached on Mann's powers and on those vested in the governing board. It was necessary for Mann to discharge some teachers, and there was disagreement in appointing new ones. The charge was made that Mann was betraying the Christians and trying to give the college over into the hands of the Unitarians. Animosities and jealousies which were local soon spread to the clergy and churches of the denomination and many were alienated. It was the usual story. When dissension takes the place of unity, a cause suffers. The decline and fall of the institution were imminent.

Financial difficulties were present from the first. Mann wrote to Combe that the institution was begun when there

was plenty of money and everyone felt rich and liberal; but that even before the doors of the institution were opened, all building materials had risen in price, interest was exorbitant, and although he did not know it, the college was bankrupt. The pernicious system of permanent scholarships was taking its toll. Debts of the college had increased. In despair, the financial agent sought help from the American Unitarian Association, an act which doubtless increased the suspicion that that body had designs on the institution.

During the first year Mann's health gave way. He was occupying his position as president at great personal and social sacrifice to himself and his family. In reply to a letter criticizing his religious views, he declared that he could earn at least a thousand dollars more than his salary at Antioch in a three-month period by lecturing, and could have the other nine months to himself. Although his salary had been fixed at two thousand dollars a year he never received half of it. By 1855 a crisis had been reached. He wrote to his friend, Rev. May: "Our college is now on its last probation. The trustees, at the last meeting, agreed to make one energetic effort between this and next April, and if, by that time, they cannot redeem it, then to abandon it for good." With a faculty receiving only one half of their pay, and with dissension among the supporters, it is little wonder that he had deep anxiety. But for the time being the impending crisis was passed. Mann, with about a dozen other men in and around Yellow Springs, became responsible for \$30,000. Others elsewhere in the country assumed responsibility for raising funds, so that a total of more than \$100,000 was in view. But it only staved off the impending crisis temporarily. In 1857 the Board of Trustees transferred the property of the college for payment of its debts. The faculty was disbanded, and a tuition charge was made for each student.

This was the year of the financial panic. It has been seen that Mann had entered upon his duties in Massachusetts just as the Panic of 1837 was breaking over the country, and that schemes for retrenchment nearly wrecked the plans for educational advance in that state. Now, twenty years later, he was called upon again to combat adverse financial conditions not under his control. The failure of the Ohio Life Insurance Company precipitated the crisis (August 25). Within a week trade was demoralized, and the rate on money increased until it stood at twenty-five per cent. A few months later people were demanding their money, and rates had increased still further to as high as one hundred per cent. Factories were closed, business slumped, many were thrown out of employment, and many strong financial concerns were wiped out. Individuals, formerly independently wealthy, were financially prostrate. Shares of stock became almost worthless, and railroads were ruined. Hysterically, runs were made on the banks, and the whole financial structure was in a state of collapse. Conditions of 1837 were being duplicated.

Already harassed by debt and dissention, Antioch College was to feel the full force of the blow. A moving spirit in the enterprise, who had given liberally of his wealth to found the college, was driven into bankruptcy; his property was sold to satisfy his creditors, leaving the college with an unpaid pledge amounting to thousands of dollars. A congressman of the district in which the institution was located, who had pledged an even larger sum, lost all of his possessions and was unable to help. The student body shrank in size, partly because the students had no money, partly because they did not have confidence in the institution's future. Mann wrote to Howe: "Young people do not like to go to a college whose walls may tumble down on their heads. . . .

The *Alma Mater* is always supposed to be a live mother and not a dead one. I can name fifty students that we have lost this year, because they feared, should they come, they would only add to the length of the funeral procession." How the families of the community were affected can be seen from Mann's estimate in the same letter that there was not enough money in the county to pay the taxes.

The insurance company which held the mortgage on the college pressed for payment of their loan. Another heroic effort was made, but under the circumstances little could be done; on April 20, 1859, the grounds and equipment were sold in the United States Court at Cincinnati, for a fraction of the indebtedness. Friends bought the college, and re-organized it, this time with a new board of trustees—twelve of the Christian denomination; eight, Unitarians. Thus the impending crisis was passed, and the college was again free to fulfill its destiny.

As usual, Mann acted the part of a valiant soldier who would not desert when difficulties came. Had he wished to pursue easier paths, the opportunities presented themselves for him to do so. In 1858, he had been requested to accept the presidency of two other colleges, Northwestern Christian University, at Indianapolis; and the University of Iowa. He was in much demand as a lyceum lecturer. He had given up "all the personal friends" of his "youth and life" and deprived himself "of almost all those abundant means of literary and scientific delight, which . . . constituted so important a part" of his enjoyments, because he believed in his mission. He was often homesick for the old scenes and fast friends in the East, but persisted in his labors, believing he was fulfilling his destiny. He was admonished to conserve his health, but cast off a plea that he resign to preserve it, with the statement that the work in which he was

engaged was so important that it was worth a thousand men as good as he.

He approached commencement day in June, 1859, in a high state of excitement. He had personally criticized and amended the productions of the senior class. After weeks of weary toil, he sat down early on the morning of commencement day to finish the baccalaureate address which he was to deliver to the class—an address hastily prepared, which he delivered to the graduates without having read it over himself. Let us picture the scene. The college had been saved! His fond hopes for the future had been realized! The college was now apparently on a solid foundation and in a position to continue to fulfill her mission. Weary, yet very happy, he delivered his remarkable and stirring message, perhaps with a premonition that he would never deliver another. He began by inquiring what he would do, were he to have his life before him again and if he could live in an “amended edition” of it, saying: “When I think of these things, I feel the Phoenix spirit glowing within me; I pant, I yearn, for another warfare in behalf of right, in hostility to wrong, where, without furlough, and without going into winter-quarters, I would enlist for another fifty-years’ campaign and fight it out for the glory of God and the welfare of men. . . . But alas! That cannot be; for while the Phoenix spirit burns within, the body becomes ashes. Not only would the sword fall from my hands; my hand would fall from the sword. I cannot go with you. You must pursue your conquering march alone.” He continued: “What, then, can I do? Can I enshrine my spirit in your hearts, so that when I fall in the ranks (as I hope to fall in the front ranks of the contest) and when my arm shall no longer strike and my voice no longer cheer, you may pursue the conflict, and win the victory?—the victory of righteousness under the



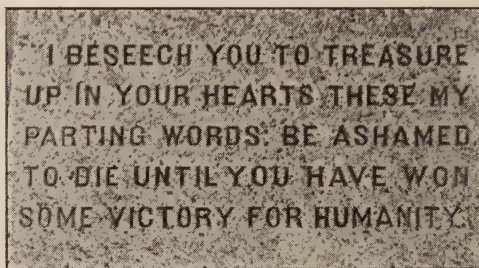
banner of Jesus Christ." He tells them he desires to transfer his enthusiasm into action through them. He speaks appealingly to them of the sources of misery and of happiness in life and exhorts them to ever war against error, firmly believing in the power of man to overcome. He admonishes: "Never shrink, never retreat, because of danger: go into the strife with your epaulettes on." In never-to-be-forgotten words, he concludes his inspiring valedictory to the class, to the college, to life itself, for they were the words of his final public utterance:

In the battle in which you have engaged against error and wrong, if ever repulsed or stricken down, may you always be solaced and cheered by the exulting cry of triumph over some abuse in Church or State, some vice or folly in society, some false opinion or cruelty or guilt which you have overcome! And I beseech you to treasure up in your hearts these my parting words: *Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity.*

The exercises of the day had lasted from seven in the morning till seven at night. After they were concluded friends came to his house for an evening social gathering which lasted till late in the night. It was too much for his weakened condition. The next day he was exhausted. Fever burned in his veins. His illness dragged on through a long, hot wearing summer. As he gradually weakened day by day and was finally told that he had only a few hours in which to live, he spent them in exhorting students and friends to live according to the laws of the universe. The three words, *Man, duty, God*, were continually on his lips. To Mr. Fay, whom he had always thought of as his successor in the presidency of the college, he exclaimed: "Preach God's laws, preach them, preach them." Calling his children to him, he gave them his final word: "When you wish to know what to

do, ask yourselves what Christ would have done in the same circumstances."

He died August second, at sixty-three, a sacrifice to his ideals and to the institution which he had learned to love. He was buried in the college grounds. The next year his remains were taken to North Burial Ground, Providence, Rhode Island, and placed beside those of his first wife. Over his grave, an obelisk, a copy of one in the Vatican in Rome, marks the last resting place of America's best-known educator. As his valedictory, he had asked: "Can I enshrine my spirit in your hearts?" The reply is given in the affection and regard with which he is held by a grateful people and in the embodiment of his principles in the great American public school, where day by day the presence of more than twenty-five million children bears witness to the vigor and expanding influence of his ideals of the common school as the agent of an expanding democracy.



INSCRIPTION ON HORACE MANN MONUMENT  
ANTIOCH COLLEGE GROUNDS

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE MAN AND HIS LEGACY TO THE SCHOOLS

THE influence of a great life does not cease with his death and entombment, but continues to grow with time and to extend to wider and wider areas. A description of Mann's life would not be complete, therefore, without a picture of the man, his qualities, his teachings, and his contribution to society. Every great man is a producer as well as a product of his own day and age. To understand his work it must be seen in its social setting. On the other hand, as a leader and pioneer in a great cause, his own personality, his aspirations, and his deeds must be envisioned as the inspiration, the motive force working to effect the change to which his life is devoted. It is the change which has come in society because of his work that is of concern. It has well been said that an institution is but the lengthened shadow of a man. If this be true, the development of the public school must be projected against the personality of the "Father of the Common School System."

In personal appearance Mann was striking. He was more than six feet tall, straight, of spare form, and altogether of commanding aspect. His well-shaped high-arching head was surmounted by a towering, beetling brow, under which his clear penetrating gray eyes sparkled brightly. His complexion was light, his features animated. He had an aggressive, well-modulated, and resonant voice. His hair, of rich silvery gray, was not always carefully groomed. He was active in person, giving the impression of great vitality. At

times his appearance was almost gaunt, the result of his invalidism. The gold-bowed spectacles which he ordinarily wore enhanced the scholarly appearance which was his naturally.

In speech, he was direct and straightforward. His style was smooth and flowing, his manner, gracious and graceful. He was skilled in using choice diction, his phrases being ornamented with beautiful sentiment and choice figures of speech. His sparkling ideas, clothed in rich, musical language, coupled with an intense earnestness, thoroughly captivated his audiences. He was a master of epigrammatic statement. Many examples occur in *The Common School Journal*, a few of which are quoted. "Nothing is more precious than time, and those who misspend it are the greatest of all prodigals." "What a sculptor is to a block of marble, education is to a human soul." "A drone in society should be as rare a phenomenon as in a hive of bees." "Blackboards are among the most efficient instruments of diffusing light." "How few things have any value which have not been either produced or modified by labor." "Truth is the most powerful thing in the world, since fiction can only please by its resemblance to it." "The curiosity of the child is the philosophy of the man." It was his uncanny ability in wielding his pointed phrases which made his speeches so effective, so convincing. Any peculiarities of manner that he exhibited were lost on his hearers as they hung intently upon his charming potent phrases. He was courteous, genial, and polished in manner. He was master of an incisive wit and ready repartee, and of a biting sarcasm, which he was ready to use in championing what he considered the right. A devastating satire easily annihilated arguments with which he lacked sympathy.

He was a reformer by nature. Like other great men of

his period and locality, he had great enthusiasms and firmly-fixed aversions. He was strong in purpose, earnest in his convictions, and forceful in action. A contemporary wrote of him: "He does not wear a double face. He does not blow hot and cold with the same breath. He does not amend, abridge, or alter his speeches to suit the latitude in which he lives. . . . He is liberal-minded, generous-hearted, dignified in his deportment, genteel in his address, and his character is like Caesar's wife, above suspicion." <sup>1</sup> He hated sham and hypocrisy with his whole being. He hated anything and everything which he saw restricting the development of man to his highest powers. Equally he despised slavery, intemperance, tobacco, war, intolerance, and orthodoxy. Like the Puritan, he had a "sleepless conscience." Liberty and independence of thinking were keystones of his thought and action. Also like the Puritan, he embodied the Puritan principle of "the free state, the free church, the free school." For them he was always willing to wage combat against assailants, using the flaming eloquence and vigor of a Hebrew prophet. His virtues were not of the suave popular variety. He could not compromise causes in which he believed. All with whom he came into contact were impressed with the forcefulness of his speech and action. A friend once wrote him: "You are a giant, a perfect moral Hercules. You slay with your club and tear asunder the jaws of those who assail you." His energy and forcefulness were matched only by his perseverance. As a boy on the farm he had early learned the value of hard work and as secretary he had labored for the whole twelve years an average of not less than fifteen hours a day, without a single day taken off for recreation. He wrote: "During travel, at hotels, on railroads, work was

<sup>1</sup> BUNGAY, GEORGE W.—*Crayon Sketches and Off-hand Takings*, page 22. Boston, 1852.



the extra passenger or guest" that attended his journeys. To be idle was, in his eyes, as great a crime as to be ignorant. To him, "Idleness is the most absurd of absurdities and the most shameful of shames." In fact he felt that this over-conscientiousness was something of a weakness, for as he had once written his sister: "It is the tendency of all our blood to enter into any work or into any feeling too intensely. Hence we are all inclined to make too serious matters of small ones; and, when matters are really serious, they absorb us, and irritate and stimulate us, to a degree which our physical organization is not fitted to bear. We all have a tendency to extremes." <sup>2</sup>

Though his aversions were often stronger than his sympathies, though he often lacerated his friends as well as his foes, and though he was a "sharp-cornered saint and prophet," he had a heart of great sympathy and an exalted sense of justice and mercy. In a day when there were so many enemies to reforms and when the public showed so much apathy, there was need for one able to arouse and to stir the unconcerned and awaken them to a realization of their need with the power of an Elijah. It is probable that Mann was often too unsparing, too vindictive, too much given to rancor. A writer said he diluted his pen too much with sulphuric acid. It does not detract from the great qualities, which far outnumbered his weaknesses, to admit frankly this fault. A recent writer has designated him "a singular compound of serpent, dove, and lion, all combined in a man of genius." <sup>3</sup>

He was a man of high honor and unquestioned integrity. His word once given, it was as good as law. During his term

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Lydia Mann, dated Washington, D. C., May 30, 1848. *Mann Papers*.

<sup>3</sup> RICHARDS, MRS. LAURA E.—*Samuel Gridley Howe*, page 159. D. Appleton-Century Company, Boston, 1909. Used by permission.

as secretary he meticulously avoided even the appearance of carelessness in his financial affairs. As a public officer there could never be any honest accusation made against him. Once, after his election to Congress, some of his partisan enemies sought to look up evidence designed to show that he had "tampered with public moneys." He defied them to examine his record "with a microscope" and suggested that the "examination would make them honester men." A contemporary attorney at law gave it as his testimony that "during the twelve years' period of service, no opponent of the cause or of Mann's views in conducting it was ever able to specify a single instance in which he had prostituted or perverted the influence of his office for any personal position or collateral end whatever."

War he hated with the deepest intensity of his being. The Constitutional Convention, he said, had refused to establish a national university, but had founded instead the West Point Military Academy, as the "normal school of war." "As the object of the common normal school is to teach teachers how to teach; so the object of this academy is to teach killers how to kill." Just before becoming secretary, he had declared on the occasion of a visit to the Charleston Navy Yard: "If a thousandth part of what has been expended in war and in preparing its mighty engines had been devoted to the development of reason, and the diffusion of Christian principles, nothing would have been known for centuries past of its terrors, its sufferings, its impoverishment, and its demoralization, but what was learned from history." For the solution to this problem, as for others, he believed in the efficacy of education. As to social amelioration of whatever kind, he saw only the need of improving mankind, with universal education as the solution.

It is in the field of universal education that his supreme

work was done and in which he will be longest and best known. Important as are other aspects of his endeavors, his effective and skillful service in legislative halls, his innovations in college procedures and administration, the acme of his work, that for which he will continue to be known in all lands and in all ages, is found in his leadership in producing a type of educational system, eventually adopted and world-wide in its scope and the basis of all social and religious reform.

In school administration he foresaw much of what is now either taken for granted or is even yet in the realm of the ideal. Merely listing the problems which came within the compass of his attention shows the scope of his interests and his breadth of vision. He urged grouping pupils into classes; advocated compulsory school attendance; inaugurated a system of school registers; suggested better school supervision; enlarged the administrative unit by battling against the district school system; apportioned school funds on the basis of the average attendance of pupils; provided for re-establishment of high schools which had been abandoned; secured the legislature's assent to legislation making it possible to establish school libraries; lengthened the school term; centralized the schools; arranged school conventions for patrons and friends of education; and encouraged the employment of women as teachers in the lower grades. He foresaw the pre-eminent need for good teachers, and through normal schools and teachers institutes sought to make them skilled. He organized county teachers' associations. Uniform textbooks were adopted for the towns. State aid was provided for all schools.

In classroom method and management his contribution was no less valuable. He advocated teaching oral composition in addition to written; advocated the word method in teach-

ing reading; urged "conversations" between teachers and pupils adapted to the age, capacities and proficiency of the latter; favored socialized classroom procedure; suggested apparatus as an aid in science instruction; urged that pupils be taught to think; stressed the notion that the emotions, as well as the intellect, must be educated; favored the inductive method of Pestalozzi as against the dogmatic textbook method previously used; introduced school music, supporting Lowell Mason in his campaign to provide music in elementary grades; opposed emulation and fear as incentives to study, substituting for them kindness and love; and urged such modern procedures as intrinsic learning. How he opposed extensive and unwarranted corporal punishment has already been narrated. How modern many of his pronouncements sound. He urged attention to education of the emotions, a subject which had never been comprehensively or minutely treated by any previous writer, saying: "Every true teacher will consider the train of *feeling*, not less than the train of thought, which is evolved by the exercises of the schoolroom." He calls attention to the importance of success in school work if mental health of pupils is to be maintained, for failure "depresses the spirits, takes away all the animation and strength derived from hope, and utterly destroys the *ideal* of intellectual accuracy." Fear he considered as an unworthy motive. "As a moral act, blind obedience is without value. As a moral act, also, obedience through fear is without value." Again, he says: "A reform in character may be begun in fear, but if it ends in fear, it will prove to be no reform." Legitimate motives are the *sine qua non* of learning. "All teachers look upon books and apparatus as indispensable to the highest progress of a school. . . . Yet how much more indispensable are a desire and purpose to learn in the breast of a child, than a book in his hand!"

He fully realized that the child's interest must be enlisted in his own learning, so that he learns not from compulsion but because of his own desire. Accordingly he believed that teachers must be the children's friends, for the children "will make no valuable and abiding acquisition, without their own consent and co-operation. . . . The teacher can neither transfuse knowledge by any process of decanting nor inject it by any force into the mind of a child; but the law of the relation subsisting between them is, that he must have the child's conscious assent and concurrence before he can impart it." He quotes Pestalozzi approvingly on the subject of interest, and believes with him that motives like fear and ambition may stimulate to greater exertion; but that they "cannot warm the heart" to make learning attractive.

He believed that discipline must be maintained among children, but that this could usually be done without resort to fear or punishment. The means of school control he placed in the following order in desirability and effectiveness: "The superiority of the heart; the superiority of the head; the superiority of the arm." He approved pupil self-government, because he saw it as a training for later duties in life; for "self-government, self-control, a voluntary compliance with the laws of reason and duty have been justly considered as the highest point of excellence attainable by a human being. . . . In order that men may be prepared for self-government, their apprenticeship must be begun in childhood." As the unreducible essentials in the teacher he named: "a love of children, and a love of his work." Such a teacher, he declared, will inspire children, whereas the *re-pining* teacher will kill the spirit of the children of any school.

Following the example of German teachers, he insisted that children have five senses all of which must be used in



their education. Believers in activity as the source of learning will applaud his statement in which he says: "Experience has now proved that it is much easier to furnish profitable and delightful employment for all of these powers than it is to stand over them with a rod and stifle their workings. . . . A child is more bound to the teacher by natural cords, the more of his natural capacities the teacher can interest and employ. Socialized classroom procedures were also approved: "The method I have described necessarily leads to conversation, and conversation with an intelligent teacher secures several important objects. It communicates information. It brightens ideas before only dimly apprehended. It addresses itself to the various faculties of the mind, so that no one of them ever tires or is cloyed. It teaches the child to use language, to frame sentences, to select words which convey his whole meaning. . . . It occupies the eye and the hand as well as the mind." Advocates of project teaching will approve his plan "for conversations" with "no restriction on choice of subjects, no limits to the extent of information that may be engrafted on them." He accepted the principle now known as apperception, and "would begin instruction with familiar things" . . . "a description of the grounds about the school-house or the paternal mansion . . . is the true starting-point of all geographical knowledge; and, this once begun, there is no terminus, until all modern and ancient geography, and all travels and explorations by sea and land, are exhausted," and so "the boy's nest of marbles may be the nucleus of all mineralogy; his top, his kite, his little windwheel, the salient points of all mechanics and technology; and the stories he has heard about the last king or the aged king, the first chapter in universal history." And there is even a hint at integration of subjects, for the "teacher connects the subject of each lesson with all kindred and collateral ones" so that

“a variety of subjects can be taught simultaneously in school, without any interference with each other; nay, that the ‘common bond’ which as Cicero said, ‘bind all sciences together,’ should only increase their unity as it enlarges their number.”

But the administration, methods of teaching, and classroom management are merely the technical trappings of the educational system. They change with the changing years and are ephemeral and transitory. They have their day of vigorous support, of heated opposition and vigorous defense, of decline and obsolescence. It is in the fundamental theories, in the philosophy underlying the institution, that the directions are fixed for decades and even centuries to come. Even the preparation of teachers, important as it is, is not an end, but only a means to excellence of instruction. Educational statesman that he was, Mann saw an emerging democracy, a new-born spirit in society, a new need for responsibility in the life of the state, which could be maintained and furthered only by a system of free, universal education.

The seething unrest and discontent in society, which has been described in an earlier chapter, affords the background against which one may understand Mann’s views. He envisioned the birth of a new era in which there would be equitable opportunities for all. He believed that society already was in a state of transition. “The idea and feeling that the world was made, and life given, for the happiness of all, and not for the ambition, or pride, or luxury, of one, or a few, are pouring in, like a resistless tide, upon the minds of men and are effecting a universal revolution in human affairs.” The last generation, born and reared under the notion that there should be “respect for established authority, merely because it was established; of veneration for law, simply because it was law; and of deference both to

secular and ecclesiastical rank, because it had been accustomed to revere rank," was being replaced by another, where "scarcely any vestige of this reverence for the past now remains." He saw the wealthy classes attempting to gain supremacy over their fellows by means of wealth alone, just as bandits and landlords of the feudal ages had dominated others through the use of their power. He foresaw that posterity would condemn men "who for the sake of amassing wealth for themselves or their families, monopolize the earnings of the laboring man, and withhold the means of education from ignorant children." Already he saw the accumulator of wealth had begun to be looked upon as a "plunderer of the earnings of his fellow man." He considered "vast fortunes a misfortune" to the state, and "all above a fortune, a misfortune" also to its possessor. He declared: "there is no equity in the allotments which assign to one man but a dollar a day with working, while another has an income of a dollar a minute without working." He saw the situation becoming worse instead of better. "The distance between the two extremes of society" he found lengthening, instead of being abridged. In Massachusetts the conditions in industry and business were exposing the state to "the fatal extremes of overgrown wealth and desperate poverty," for which he saw education as the only remedy for counteracting the tendency towards "the domination of capital and the servility of labor." Wealth, as the means of culture, and education, as a means of promoting the arts and sciences, of discovering and diffusing truth, he highly commended; but wealth, as a means to an idle life, as a fosterer of pride, as a means of forcing the poor into submission, he deprecated with all his heart.

Society he saw in transition, too, in another respect. The fundamental beliefs of the people were being overthrown

and all was a welter of confusion. Some were found who believed that everything was unsettled, that "maxims in conduct, and truth in morals, which had passed current and unquestioned for ages" would have to be reanalyzed and re-examined; that "the great axioms of life" would have to be demonstrated again, if they were to endure. He believed that truth would survive such an examination, truth being eternal, whatever confusion might exist in interpreting it. Amid the vortex of uncertainty and confusion in a troubled period, he saw the function of education to be that of inspiring a love of truth, of stimulating men to decide great principles upon broad and altruistic lines. Only if this spirit should animate the public, would the troublesome problems of society be solved. In a time of moral and political confusion he found newspapers and periodicals, political parties and churches as the instruments of factions and as divisive in their effects. Newspapers and periodicals had been established to promote and defend some particular doctrine, and attempted to "define truth by law, and to perpetuate it by power and wealth rather than by knowledge." Men have joined political parties to further a certain point of view, while few have sought truth independent of party. "The universe was not constructed upon party principles; it can never be successfully administered upon them." The church he saw divided into sects, appealing to only one-half of the population and that the adult half. Among all these diverse and contending forces, he envisioned only one institution which, free from the dominance of party and "unblasted by the fiery breath of animosity," could cultivate feelings of goodwill. This institution, the common school, he declared must be kept as neutral ground amid the fierce collision of doctrines, free from propaganda, free from "proselytism to religious creeds, or to partisan doctrines." Since men of all

beliefs must be taxed to support the schools and the mass of children cannot find instruction elsewhere, it would be an intolerable aggression on the rights of a citizen to compel him to support an institution teaching a religious or political doctrine which he himself opposes. He judged it a supreme function of the school "to strengthen the minds of children . . . and thus to prepare them, as far as by any human means they can be prepared, to bring a clearer and stronger mind, and less selfish and impure affections—a more ardent love of man and a higher reverence for God, to the decision of those momentous questions of time and eternity, which, in the last resort, each man must not only decide for himself, but must abide the consequence of the decision."

The common school, he says, and it alone, "is the institution which can receive and train up children in the elements of all good knowledge and of virtue, before they are subjected to the alienating competitions of life. This institution is the greatest discovery ever made by man—we repeat it, *the common school is the greatest discovery ever made by man.*"

Universal education, free from political or sectarian bias—that was his main theme. To the Thirty-one Schoolmasters he had declared: "On schools and teachers I rely more than on any other earthly instrumentality, for the prosperity and honor of the state, and for the reformation and advancement of the race. All other reforms seek to abolish specific ills; education ministers to universal improvement. Other reforms are remedial; education is preventive." He saw the hope for political safety in education widely diffused, rather than in the discovery of new truth, for "while a philosopher is discovering one new truth, millions (i.e. of truths) may be propagated amongst the people." Because education must prepare legislators, jurors, judges, and pub-



lic officers and train citizens for all the manifold duties of life, it must be universal. "The whole land must be watered with the streams of knowledge. It is not enough to have, here and there, a beautiful fountain playing in palace gardens; but let it come like the abundant fatness of the clouds



MONUMENT AT MANN'S GRAVE  
NORTH BURIAL GROUND, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

upon the thirsting earth." Education, not coercion, must always be the method in a republic. "We cannot drive our people up a dark avenue, even though it be the right one; but we must hang the lights of starry knowledge about it, and show them not only the directness of its course to the

goal of prosperity and honor, but the beauty of the way that leads to it." In his *Twelfth Annual Report* he pays a glowing tribute to the service of the universal school:

In a social and political sense, it is a *free* school system. It knows no distinction of rich and poor, of bond and free, or between those who, in the imperfect light of this world, are seeking, through different avenues, to reach the gate of heaven. Without money and without price, it throws open its doors, and spreads the table of its bounty for all the children of the state. Like the sun, it shines, not only upon the good, but upon the evil, that they may become good; and like the rain, its blessings descend, not only upon the just, but upon the unjust, that their injustice may depart from them and be known no more.<sup>4</sup>

The school that Mann saw in his dreams must be non-partisan both in religion and in politics. His real position has sometimes been misunderstood. It has been charged that he was an opponent of religious teaching in the common school. Nothing could be farther from the truth. He was convinced that there could be no practical morals without religion and that "no community will ever be religious without religious education." The necessity of universal religious instruction was one of his principal tenets and an anxious care. But it must not be sectarian. "The religious education which a child receives at school, is not imparted to him, for the purpose of making him join this or that denomination, when he arrives at years of discretion, but for the purpose of enabling him to judge for himself according to the dictates of his own reason and conscience what his religious obligations are, and whither they lead." He opposed parochial schools as impractical, quoting a friend as giving an account of one village where there were *fourteen*

<sup>4</sup> "Twelfth Annual Report." *Life and Works of Horace Mann*, Vol. IV, page 336. Boston, 1891.

different churches, and so, if parochial schools were established, would need fourteen different schools. From this point of view there were five ways of handling religious instruction in schools: (*a*) The schools might be purely secular, expressly excluding all religious instruction; (*b*) a state system might be established and prescribed, with teachers and officers appointed to enforce it; (*c*) each religious sect might be empowered, wherever and whenever it could get a majority, to determine what religious faith should be taught in them; (*d*) the schools might refuse to have any interference with the secular education of the young, and abandon religious education to private and parental control, and (*e*) all might agree upon reading the Bible, uninterpreted, in the schools and emphasize nonsectarian instruction as was the practice in Massachusetts under the Board of Education. Because some people wished to destroy the schools, Mann believed that the government was compelled to abstain from any religious impositions, allowing to each man that freedom of conscience to secure which the Pilgrim Fathers had emigrated from religious oppression in England to find a haven in this country.

Just as staunchly and emphatically, Mann opposed the use of the schools as a place for political propaganda. He took issue with those who sought to give a partisan treatment in teaching the Constitution, but favored teaching the fundamental nature of government. He believed that the schools should teach only the great principles which remain relatively constant and unchanged, only the fundamental principles of republican government. He would not allow "the tempest of political strife" to be let loose on the schools, a cause which could result only in "gladitorial contests." Between the opposites of no study at all or only partisan study, Mann found a middle course which he believed would

be satisfactory to all; namely, that disputed points would be passed by without comment, and "that all indoctrination into matters of controversy between hostile political parties is to be elsewhere sought for, and elsewhere imparted."

Thus the philosophy of the free universal publicly supported public schools of America was set in its main directions. Catering to no factions or groups but ministering to all, common schools were to be schools "of the people, by the people, and for the people," of the *whole* people, by the *whole* people, for the *whole* people.

## CHAPTER XVII

### HIS WIDENING INFLUENCE

IT was not only in Massachusetts that Mann's influence bore fruit in giving an impulse to education. He was known from one end of the country to the other. In 1841, when James Wadsworth wished to contribute a large sum in behalf of the New York schools, he had written to ask Mann's advice. The result was that Emerson and Potter's textbook on teaching problems was distributed free to each teacher in the state of New York. Again, when New York sought a principal for the newly established normal school at Albany, the committee conferred with the Massachusetts secretary, and it was on his recommendation that David P. Page was selected. How irreparable a loss his death was to the teacher-education program and the cause of education in New York is indicated by Mann's remark that "Fifty men might be selected in New York, or in Massachusetts, fit to be governors of their respective states, to one who is competent to take charge of a normal school." While he was on his way to Albany to take up his duties as principal of the New York normal school, Page had stopped in Boston and had spent a long evening with the secretary discussing the dangers and difficulties in the new project. When they parted in the wee hours of the morning, Mann had said to him: "*Succeed or die.*" Imbued with Mann's indomitable spirit and exalted conception of his mission, Page went forth to write one of the most widely distributed books on teaching in America's educational history, for his *Theory and Prac-*



*tice of Teaching* was for many years the most widely known and used book of its kind and was immeasurably effective in setting the pattern for teaching. At the same time his few years as principal at Albany grounded firmly the notion that special institutions for the preparation of teachers must supplant the academy as a teacher-training institution.

There was scarcely a state in the whole union into which his influence did not penetrate. At Barnard's request he went to Hartford while the legislature was in session, and did much to prepare the legislative mind for the action which resulted in establishing a Board of School Commissioners for that state. One of his addresses at Providence, Rhode Island, was in great measure responsible for the establishment of the high school in that city. When New Orleans wished to appoint a principal of their public schools, the school board appointed J. A. Shaw, on the recommendation of Mr. Mann. A committee appointed by the Maryland legislature to prepare a system of common schools for the state, wrote to him asking for the details of the Massachusetts system.

He spoke before countless teachers' institutes in Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio. When Iowa wished to organize an educational system, Mann was asked to serve as a member of the committee. He addressed the first meeting of the Indiana State Teachers Association (1854) on "The Duty of the State to Provide for and Control the Education of Youth." Similarly, he addressed the first session of the Missouri State Teachers Association, and helped to set its direction. His visit to St. Louis was responsible for establishing the normal school in that city. He was asked to speak at the second annual session of the Illinois State Teachers Association. Samuel G. Lewis wrote from Ohio to ask advice about a college in Cincinnati. A member of the Board of Regents of the University of Michigan sought di-

rection in the selection of a chancellor. He addressed regional and national gatherings of teachers. He was presiding officer of the American Association for the Advancement of Education, organized in 1849, and superseded in 1857 by the National Education Association. He himself had said, in his *Ninth Annual Report*: "Not a week passes, from one end of the year to another, when we are not called upon by leading men of other states and countries to give information respecting the organization, the administration, and the success of the schools. . . ."

He was the dauntless leader. Other leaders there were, but his own leadership was the symbol and center of the cause. Men like Carter, Gallaudet, Page, Pierce, Emerson, earnest and sincere as they were, were chiefly *local* leaders, but Mann's fame had spread throughout all the states and among foreign nations. Even Barnard was not so well known, being fifteen years Mann's junior. Barnard's fame came later than Mann's, chiefly from his writings and editorial labors. His *American Journal of Education* is his monument. This was begun in August, 1855, eight years after Mann's work in behalf of the common schools had already been done. We have already noted that Barnard was agreeable to accepting a position as principal of one of the Massachusetts normal schools under Mann's direction, could satisfactory arrangements have been made.

Abroad, Mann's fame had spread no less than in the United States. Already known by his writings when he visited Europe in 1843, his opinion and advice was sought by European leaders. Victor Cousin knew of him and of his work. Not only were his reports reprinted in many states of the Union, but were likewise issued in foreign countries. The governments of Germany and Great Britain printed them for circulation in their respective countries.

Sarmiento of South America, distinguished publicist and educator, inspired by Mann's influence, returned to Santiago in 1848, made a report to the Chilean secretary of public instruction, and wrote a book, *De la educacion popular*, in 1849. He described the Massachusetts school system, the town meetings, and printed a part of the Massachusetts law. Enthused over the system of education as found in the United States, he had written: "It is their educational institutions that are entitled to the glory of having brought the freemen of North America to a stage of perfection." He returned to the United States in 1863, investigated the schools further, and upon his return, translated the life of Horace Mann. Regarding Mann's writings which had just been published, he said: "If I could give any advice to South American governments, this would be that they should procure the greatest possible number of copies of that work and scatter them freely in every city and village." Five years later he had become president of Argentina. He established normal schools and in 1873 issued a decree reorganizing the curriculum of the secondary schools. He employed teachers from the United States to carry his reforms into effect.

Laboulayé had written from France to Sarmiento: "It is the schools that will regenerate the world, and a day will come when it will be felt that Horace Mann is a truly great man and has been more useful to humanity than all the Cæsars."

Just as Sarmiento had received his inspiration from Mann, so, in turn did Jose Pedro Varelo, the great Uruguayan educator, who visited in the United States in 1868, drink from the same source. He projected a law in his own country which incorporated the educational ideas and system of the United States. For his contributions to education in

Uruguay, his inspiration came mostly from Mann. No higher tribute could have been paid to Mann than the soubriquet applied to Varelo, *The Horace Mann of Uruguay*.

Honors in abundance had come to Mann in his lifetime. Harvard had conferred upon him the LL.D. degree while he was a member of Congress (1849). He had been made a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (1845). He had held offices of importance in state and nation. Both in this country and abroad his advice was sought upon the educational problems of the day. His was considered the master mind in the common school enterprise.

After his death many tributes honored him. One of the earliest was the erection of a statue on the State House grounds in Boston, the first erected anywhere to one who had served the common schools. By the irony of fate, his statue and that of Daniel Webster stand side by side, Webster's to the right, Mann's to the left as one approaches the main entrance to the grounds. This heroic statue, modeled by Miss Emma Stebbins, was dedicated July 4, 1865, Samuel G. Howe presiding. It had been paid for by the subscriptions of friends and school children. As Charles Sumner sent his contribution, he wrote: "If each person in Massachusetts who has been benefited by the vast and generous labors of Horace Mann—each person who hates intemperance and who hates slavery—each person who loves education, and who loves humane efforts for the prisoner, the poor, and the insane—should contribute a mite only, then his statue would be of gold." In his dedicatory address Governor Andrews paid this glowing tribute: "Not for his sake, therefore, but for ours, and for our children's in the name of Massachusetts, and in behalf of her people; of the sacred cause of learning and of the not less holy cause of liberty, I inaugurate this monumental effigy of Horace Mann. . . .



HORACE MANN MONUMENT  
STATE HOUSE GROUNDS, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



On the brow of Beacon Hill, in front of the Capitol of the Commonwealth, side by side, the statues of Webster and Mann will attract the gaze of the coming generations, defying the decays of time. . . . On the one hand is the statue of Daniel Webster, the great jurist, the great statesman, the great American. On the other hand is the statue of Horace Mann, the teacher of philosophy in its application both to



HORACE MANN MONUMENT WITH THAT OF DANIEL WEBSTER  
IN THE BACKGROUND

STATE HOUSE GROUNDS, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

politics and to popular learning, whose constituency was mankind. The rising sun of the morning will turn from the purple east to salute his brow; and when his golden orb ascends to the zenith, shining down from on high in the heavens, he will wrap and warm them both with generous embrace in his lambent love and glory."

Many, on other occasions added their generous praise. "He will be remembered, till the history of Massachusetts is forgotten, as one of her greatest benefactors," said Ed-

ward Everett. Theodore Parker had written: "He took the common schools of Massachusetts in his arms and blessed them," and again, "If we were asked for the man who in the last ten years had done the greatest service to his state, we should not hesitate to name the secretary of the Board of Education, who will doubtless blame us for writing of him who hides himself behind his work." Sumner added his tribute: "We are all his debtors more than we can ever repay." Henry Barnard wrote in evaluating his influence: "It was his reports and lectures that brought education literally up to the consideration of the best educated men in the country. All that had been written for twenty-five years before did not produce so much influence as one of his lectures published and disseminated over the country."

Francis W. Parker coupled Mann's name with those of Washington and Lincoln as one of the three great builders of the American republic. "Washington and Lincoln represent the highest types of heroism, patriotism, and wisdom in the great crises of republic-buildings; Horace Mann, the quiet inner building, the soul development of the nation."<sup>1</sup> Though he contributed no new educational theory or method as Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Rousseau had done, and though others have made a more careful study of methods and of child nature, he was without doubt the outstanding educator produced on this continent. Felix Pecauc, Inspector-General of Public Instruction and Director of Studies in the Higher Normal School at Fontenay-aux-Roses, France, well characterizes the man and his work: "In him the citizen, the prophet, the schoolmaster are united." He continues: "A statesman, a man of action, he does not administer educational affairs, he does not teach like a schoolmaster,

<sup>1</sup> PARKER, FRANCIS W.—*Educational Review*, page 65, June, 1896. Henry Holt and Co., New York.

bent to the routine of his trade; he aims at positive results, he seeks to reach the soul of the people, of all the children of the people; he seeks to call intelligence into light, to reach consciences, to form of every citizen a man, to act in an appreciable manner on *life*."

In an issue of *The Common School Journal*,<sup>2</sup> a poem is printed (perhaps from Mann's own hand, but whether written by him or not, expressing his motive), which describes aptly and forcefully the rôle of the reformer, the pioneer:

The true Reformer, like the Pioneer  
Who hews the western forest, must throw by  
All thought of ease or resting till he die;  
Nor in his noble breast admit the fear  
Of ill, although, through life, he may not hear  
The voice of friend, nor see one loving eye  
To cheer him on his way of duty high,  
And warn him when his foes are lurking near.  
Yet fields of beauty, by his dauntless hand  
Shall rise in loneliness, where now gloom  
Of Error doth the light of Truth withstand;  
The lonely wilderness he fells shall bloom  
Throughout all after-time; and those who now  
Scowl with mad hate, before his tomb shall bow.

Before Mann's tomb as a true reformer now bow all those who dream of an America and of a world, humanized, exalted, and enriched through the agency of universal schools and universal means of intelligence.

<sup>2</sup> Volume VIII, page 55. February 16, 1846.

## SOURCE MATERIALS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL READINGS

Were one to publish a complete list of references to the life and work of Horace Mann it would form a complete volume in itself. No useful purpose would be served by burdening the present work with an extended bibliography. On the other hand, the reader will be interested in a selected number of references which indicate the sources of some of the materials used in the present volume and which will offer suggestions for further reading and study.

The truest picture of the life of a man is left in his personal correspondence and his intimate records of his life. Fortunately, the greater part of Mann's correspondence has been preserved. The *Mann Papers*, on file at the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, furnish a rich mine of information. Here are found letters and documents covering the period from his early days in college to his last days at Antioch College. Of particular value is his private diary or journal, begun shortly before he became secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education. As it was written to record his own inmost thoughts rather than for the public eye, it records his motives faithfully. The Society also has possession of the *Edward Everett Papers*, which contain interesting sidelights on the events of the time.

For a description of Mann's boyhood days, Mortimer Blake's *History of Franklin, Massachusetts*, and Henry Barnard's *Biographical Sketch of Horace Mann*, published in the *American Journal of Education*, furnish much in-

formation. *The Litchfield Law School*, published for the Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut (1933), contains much detailed historical data regarding this foremost law school of the 1820's when Mann was a law student. At the Dedham Historical Society's library, Dedham, Massachusetts, there may be found many legal documents and much correspondence relating to Mann's legal career.

For a description of the activities during his secretaryship, there is no better source than the documents themselves. Among these are the *Abstracts of School Returns*, published annually, and preserved at the Massachusetts State Library in the State House; the *Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education*, and the *Annual Reports of the Board of Education*; and *The Common School Journal*, published for a decade (1839-1848) by Mann himself and circulated semimonthly throughout the state. These documents have much of value for the educator today. A valuable volume is his *Lectures and Reports on Education*, which contains his lectures given at school conventions during the early days of his secretaryship. His *Oration Delivered before the Authorities of the City of Boston* serves well to dramatize the importance of universal education as a *sine qua non* of a republican form of government.

For a complete description of the religious struggles of the day and an account of Mann's controversies with religious opponents there is no better source than *Horace Mann and Religion in the Massachusetts Public Schools* (Raymond B. Culver, New Haven, 1929). His controversy with the Boston school masters is best traced through the documents themselves, including the *Seventh Annual Report*, the *Remarks on the Seventh Annual Report*, the *Reply to*



the "Remarks" of the Thirty-one Boston Schoolmasters, the *Rejoinder to the "Reply"* . . . to the "Remarks," and *Penitential Tears*. The general reader will be little interested in the details of this weary argument.

The reader who is interested in Mann's social reforms will wish to read in several of his writings: his *Two Lectures on Intemperance* (1852); the *Reports and Other Documents Relating to the State Lunatic Hospital at Worcester, Massachusetts* (1837); his *Letters and Speeches on Slavery* (1851) and his *A Few Thoughts for a Young Man* (1850) in which he expresses his views on the accumulation of great wealth. His views on the growing independence of women may be read in his *A Few Thoughts on the Powers and Duties of Women* (1853).

Three principal sources of information giving his opinions on higher education are to be found in the *Dedication of Antioch College and Inaugural Address of Its President*, Horace Mann (1854); *The College Code of Honor*, an address to the students of Antioch College (1857); and the *Demands of the Age on Colleges*, an address delivered (1854) before the Christian Convention, the group sustaining the college.

An intimate picture of his life is given by his second wife, Mary Peabody Mann in her *Life of Horace Mann*. There are phases of his character which would have remained hidden from the world were it not for this keen and penetrating analysis of his motives. To name all his contemporaries who left descriptions of his life and work would be a futile undertaking.

Several volumes will serve to give an understanding of the social and educational background at the time when Mann became secretary. For a description of The American

Lyceum the reader is referred to *The American Lyceum: Its History and Contribution to Education* (United States Department of Education); and *The American Lyceum* (Old South Leaflets, No. 139). The latter gives the official description of the movement. The *Proceedings* of the American Institute of Instruction furnish a wealth of information on the educational spirit of the times. A standard, well written statement of the growth of the universal school idea is contained in *The Evolution of the Massachusetts School System*, by G. H. Martin. There is an excellent description of *The New England Reformers* by Ralph Waldo Emerson, closely allied with them.

Several standard authorities have written interestingly of the political and social scene of a century ago. Among them are Arthur B. Darling, who has described extensively the *Political Changes in Massachusetts, 1824-1848*; James Truslow Adams, who has written his classic *The Epic of America*; Carl R. Fish who interestingly traces *The Rise of the Common Man*; A. M. Schlesinger who sketches *New Viewpoints in American History*; and S. E. Morison and H. S. Commager who have presented a fascinating picture of our national development in *The Growth of the American Republic*.

Those who wish a more complete bibliography are referred to the *Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1895-1896*, Vol. I, pages 897-927. Here will be found a list of more than seven hundred titles in a bibliography prepared by Benjamin Pickman Mann, a son of Horace Mann. This may be augmented by reference to the *Reader's Guide* and the indexes to current literature. No attempt is made here to list the many magazine articles, books, and other writings about Mann.

Footnotes throughout the pages of this volume give specific references to much source material which has formed the background against which this narrative of Mann's life has been projected.



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